

Sketch

Members joined in holy acrimony



Simon Hoggart

THE House yesterday debated the Family Law Bill, which mainly concerns divorce. There was a free vote, which I always enjoy, since the Commons has a certain charm when MPs do not have to stick to a script provided by the Whips. Instead we are invited to paddle in their streams of consciousness. For instance, Dr Jeremy Bray (Lab, Motherwell S), announced — to my surprise — that a while ago the Church of England had contemplated introducing two levels of marriage, one involving total commitment and the other only a qualified commitment. One wonders how the new semi-marriage service would go. "Wilt thou forsake most others, so long as ye both shall live, or ye get really fed up, whichever comes first? To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for richer, in fitness and in wealth, till someone a bit taster comes along. ... The debate concerned no-fault divorce. Many MPs, not all rightwing Conservatives, spoke against this. Edward Leigh (Con, Chesham) had found the man to blame. Surprisingly, this turned out to be Ronald Reagan. To most rightwing Tories the former president was a man who could do no wrong. Of course, in their view he did not begin to compare with Margaret Thatcher, having a skull filled with styrofoam. They saw him as a cross between Stan Laurel and John the Baptist. It turned out that as governor of California he had brought in the first no-fault divorce law and subsequently every other state in the union had followed. (The problem for supporters of the former president is that, while he was a man whose instincts were invariably correct, and whose political will was unwavering,

he did some really stupid things.) Anyhow, according to Mr Leigh, the states were now lining up to change the law back. For a Tory rightwinger to criticise Ronald Reagan is strange enough, but Mr Leigh astonished us more with a brief encomium of the Duchess of York (or whatever her title is these days). He praised her separation. "This was not a quickie divorce, but it was after two years, and, as we know, they remain the bestest of friends." Offering Andrew and Fergie as a model of how to conduct your affairs (or even your affairs) is unusual, to say the least. After Dr Bray we heard Mr Patrick Nichols (C, Teignbridge), who used to be a full-time divorce lawyer. I was reminded of the American joke: "Why do people take an instantaneous dislike to lawyers? Because it saves so much time." But Mr Nichols made a speech of real passion. It was sometimes glibberish ("the bottomless pit of misery in which many unhappily married people put each other is bottomless") but the blend of experience and sincerity is something we rarely hear these days. His description of the old, fault-finding divorce trials ("there is no video nasty which more horrifies and squirmingly embarrasses...") was moving and powerful. Earlier Mr Michael Fabricant introduced a curious bill designed to "strengthen institutions" between Britain, the US, and the old Dominion. Quite how you do that by law I do not see. Still, it gives me the chance to apologise to Mr Fabricant for suggesting that he has joined the chicken-run. In fact, his seat has been abolished, and his new constituency is perhaps the old. My apologies. I have asked Mr Fabricant, as a quid pro quo, to tell me whether his hair is a wig. I shall report his reply. STOP PRESS: This has just arrived, addressed to "Simon Hoggart MP", which is kind. He writes: "I shall keep you guessing, I'll just say 'it is not what it seems.' I think he's telling us it is real, and indeed many of his colleagues insist that no one would conceivably buy a hairpiece which looked like that."

First night

Better than chic to chic any day

Caroline Sullivan

WHAT greater sign of mass approval than to be invited to perform your new single in the National Lottery Show? Yet k.d. lang, who will do so on May 4, would not have been asked if the lottery had existed 10 years ago. Out lesbian singers, thin on the ground now, hardly existed then, and the mildly mannered, lower-cased k. was considered positively dangerous at first. How a hit album and a Grammy changed perceptions. Since 1992's platinum-selling Ingénue, lang has not only been welcome at the best venues, she has become a benchmark of vocal elegance. Utterly clear and emotive, her voice is almost unparalleled in pop, and her following has been augmented by straight couples wooed by her ability to illuminate rare and love songs. But few heterosexuals go to her gigs. The opening night of her first British tour for three years was overwhelmingly populated by gay women there to worship the "big-boned gal from Alberta" (those bones are draped in quiet trouser-suits these days, after an ill-advised flirtation with Italian designers). Lang is singing better than ever, but seems to be treading water careerwise. The current record, All You Can Eat, has enjoyed nothing like the success of its predecessor, forcing the precocity of the Birmingham Academy to be reduced "to preserve the intimacy of the performance". But

if lang never regains the giddy heights of being shaved by Cindy Crawford on the cover of the Fair, it is our loss. Even if she did not own that voice, whose rare beauty leaves one stupid with awe, she would put on quite a show. She is easily more comfortable on stage than off, drinking in the adoration of her girls, who approach the stage with flowers and sweets. Both a comedian and a tease, she dons a succession of increasingly glittery jackets while chatting about her unrequited passion for Uma Thurman. Her just-us girls manner makes us all honorary lesbians for the night — and it is worth noting that her casual references to her sexuality are more persuasive than all of Madonna's panting bisexual chic. Much of the music harks back to k.d.'s country roots. She resurrects old numbers like Two Cigarettes in An Ash-tray and Roy Orbison's Crying, which dip into her reservoir of bathos. Country schmaltz, rather than her current lounge pop, is what lang was made for. Lang surrenders to the majestic corniness of it all, backed to perfection by Ozzy Osbourne's former guitarist. The group includes a former Janet Jacksonite, whose belief that he was joining a "kinder, gentler" band must have been shattered by lang's penchant for dancing on the piano. "The contradictory facets of kathy dawn lang mesh seamlessly and seductively in this show. I would lock up my daughters. This review appeared in later editions yesterday"

'Bomb' bank offers to pay cost of detonating postbag

Alan Watkins

BARCLAYS Bank took the unusual step yesterday of offering to pay towards the cost of a police and bomb disposal operation after a suspicious package blown up at one of its branches turned out to be full of its own documents.

The incident happened in the early hours of Tuesday morning at Stowmarket, Suffolk, after a passerby found a box-like object left against the wall of the bank. Police sealed off the area for more than four hours and called in the army, who inspected the object and found it to be an official Barclays post bag.

Redwood and Goldsmith agree on referendum but disagree on tactics

Michael White and Simon Beavis

JOHN Redwood made common cause yesterday with Sir James Goldsmith to press John Major's cabinet for a referendum on European federalism — possibly before the coming general election — in the hope of bringing about a fundamental renegotiation of the Treaty of Rome. The former Tory leadership challenger repeatedly stressed he will not break ranks with his party. He predictably failed to persuade the billion-pound financier to drop his threat to run pro-referendum candidates against sitting MPs in the election — risking the prospect, Mr Redwood warned Sir James, of helping to oust Mr Major from power. Sir James made clear his

desire for an advisory referendum — "Who should run Britain: Westminster or Brussels?" — followed by a renegotiation of British membership and a second, binding referendum. Many Tories regard such talk as tantamount to withdrawal from the European Union, which Mr Major described as "cloud cuckoo land" yesterday. Mr Redwood told Sir James that the government was "moving in the direction of renegotiation". In flattering acknowledgement of each other's role, he and Sir James agreed they wanted "the same kind of Europe", and disagreed mainly over tactics. One option they discussed was a snap referendum to wrong-foot the Labour leader, Tony Blair, followed by a triumphant election campaign if the anti-federalists won.

As the pair met for 50 minutes at London's Dorchester Hotel, Tory MPs were assessing the impact of Mr Major's latest attempt to heal the deepening party wound over Europe, exacerbated this week by the confused cabinet signals over the best crisis. Ministers met again yesterday to thrash out acceptable terms for the EU to lift the beef ban. In a calculated balancing act, the Prime Minister urged both sides of his party — and federalists across the Channel — to abandon "stereotypes and slogans" in favour of realism. "As Prime Minister I believe it does the country no service to suggest that the only choice we face is either to go along with every demand our partners make or head for the exit. That is naive and damaging and just

plain wrong," he told the Institute of Directors annual conference in London. But Mr Major simultaneously laid down tough terms for Britain's continued co-operation, including an explicit threat to veto future EU legislation if existing agreements are "undermined by shifts in interpretation" — a direct dig at backdoor extensions of the social chapter. "I don't want to be misunderstood about this: if old agreements are to be broken, I don't see how we can reach new ones," he warned. With the EU's 15 member states engaged in the year-long Maastricht review conference, that is no idle threat. Disillusioned Tory MPs and activists will need more than words to be convinced ministers have the will to stand up for Britain against the EU. With ministers' supporters

blaming each other for this weekend's on-off threats to retaliate against Europe for the beef ban, the Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, warned farmers' leaders yesterday that "there is still a lot of persuasion" needed if next Monday's meeting of farm ministers is to start a step-by-step lifting of the ban. "It could take some time. It might involve — probably will involve — moving in steps," said Mr Hogg who promised to "put some flesh" on new ideas, including a likely selective cull from BSE-infected herds. In a buoyant mood at the 100, Mr Major insisted that Europe was "beginning to carry our success" in restoring economic competitiveness. He also hit out at the "Little England" thinking of Eurosceptics. "Frankly the idea that if we were outside

the EU we could somehow become a trading haven on the edge of Europe with all the benefits of that vital market of \$70 million, while others fix the rules without any regard at all to our national self-interest, is cloud cuckoo land." With some Tory sceptics sharing Mr Redwood's hunch that a seismic shift in public attitudes is under way, they believe Europe is the key to election victory over Labour. They claimed a moral victory after 66 Tory MPs voted on Tuesday for a bill to curb the European Court of Justice. Last night Sir James praised Mr Redwood. "I recognise that he is part of the party of government and as such he has to fight within the Tory party for a broad number of issues and one of the issues he is fighting for is a referendum on Europe," he said.

Labour MP and Blair aide clash in court

David Pallister

ONE of the most enduring personality conflicts in the Labour Party erupted in the High Court yesterday when MP George Galloway launched a vitriolic attack on Tony Blair's press secretary, Alastair Campbell, in his role as political editor of Robert Maxwell's Daily Mirror four years ago.



Alastair Campbell, formerly on Robert Maxwell's Daily Mirror, now Tony Blair's press secretary, who was attacked in court by George Galloway MP yesterday. Mr Campbell was, he said, 'a man who did service with such gusto for the greatest thief in the 20th century' and 'is a person to keep a wary eye on'

Giving evidence for Rupert Allason, Tory MP for Torbay, in his action against the Mirror for publishing a malicious falsehood, Mr Galloway described Mr Campbell as Mr Maxwell's "hired character assassin". Mr Galloway, Labour MP for Glasgow Hillhead, claimed he saw Mr Campbell in the House of Commons soliciting a Labour MP to sign an early day motion critical of Mr Allason. He took particular notice of the motion in Mr Campbell's hand. He said: "I always kept a weather eye on what he was up to, which was generally no good." Asked by Charles Gray, QC, for the Mirror, what his feelings towards Mr Campbell were, he replied: "I have to keep them to myself but in a court of law — a man who did service with such gusto for the greatest thief in the 20th century is a person to keep a wary eye on."

Mr Campbell has denied having anything to do with preparing or faking the motion, although the court heard it was drafted by one of his colleagues, David Bradshaw. A story on the motion in the Mirror said 50 MPs were calling on Mr Allason to donate £250,000 libel damages he had won from the Mirror Group to the Maxwell pensioners. Mr Galloway agreed that as a fierce critic of Mr Maxwell he had often been the subject of adverse stories in the Mirror. "I was frequently on the receiving end of his lash." He was angry at the motion which, in his experience, was an unprecedented attack on an MP. As a result, he tipped off Mr Allason. Mr Gray put to him that Mr Campbell never had the motion in his hand, and had not spoken to an MP about it. "I don't know anyone who believes that," he replied. Mr Galloway said when he tackled the Labour MP who tabled the motion, the late Jimmy Boyce, he was in tears and full of confusion. Another Labour MP, Richard Caborn, said he was approached with the draft motion by Mr Bradshaw and asked if he would table it. He suggested Mr Boyce. He assured Mr Bradshaw he and Mr Boyce would get 50 MPs to sign it. In the event, only seven did that evening. Earlier, Charles Wilson, managing director of Mirror Group Newspapers and acting editor of the Independent, said he was subpoenaed to explain his oversight of Mr Allason's complaint in November 1992. He said he had delegated the in-house investigation, ordered by David Montgomery, the chief executive, to the legal director, Arthur Davidson, QC, a former shadow attorney general. Mr Wilson

said he concluded that Mr Campbell's assurance he had not played a part in the early day motion was well-founded. But he did not know who had drafted it. Asked if he would be surprised to learn it was his own political correspondent, he said: "I see no reason why I should be surprised. ... It was four years ago." The judge, Sir Maurice Drake, said: "This court is concerned to find out the truth about what happened when the EDM, David Montgomery asked you to investigate and you might be expected to give more help than anyone else."



George Galloway MP, agreed with Charles Gray, QC, for the Daily Mirror, that as a fierce critic of Maxwell he had often been the subject of adverse stories in the Mirror about his personal and political career. 'I was frequently on the receiving end of his lash, and his lackeys were frequently writing about me'

Teachers to go on strike as violent pupil stays at school

continued from page 1 special unit and receive home tuition. Rita and Philip Wilding, whose eldest son was expelled from the school, said Richard was not as bad as he was painted. Last night Mr de Gruchy dismissed the offer as "a bizarre and baffling arrangement". He said it was "profoundly unsatisfactory". Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, pledged to review the appeals system for disruptive schoolchildren. "The Government would look at the appeals system, under which parents could challenge a school's decision to expel their child, as part of a crackdown on indiscipline in schools. "We need to look at the right of appeal, especially where extreme cases are involved," she said. Headteachers have been pressing her to issue stricter guidance to panels, to give greater weight to the school's reasons for expelling a pupil. Gladstone School's headteacher, David Higgins, and governors did not attend the appeal hearing which ordered Richard Wilding back to the school. A spokesman at the Department for Education and Employment said the teachers' decision was "regrettable" and urged the education authority to redouble its efforts to find a solution. An education authority spokesman said talks would continue "with all parties" and there would be a full statement this morning. Mr de Gruchy understood the authority was talking to Richard's parents and the lawyer tonight in the hope of persuading them to think again.

Superman actress found 'lost and disorientated'

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

MARGOT KIDDER, the actress who played Lois Lane in the Superman films, was in hospital in Los Angeles yesterday after being found covering and disorientated in a suburban garden. Ms Kidder, aged 47, has suffered from health problems since a filming accident six years ago, and faced ruin because her insurance cover was inadequate. She was "frightened, paranoid, dirty and dishevelled, and obviously mentally confused," said a spokesman for the police in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendale. Ms Kidder had last been seen on Saturday evening at Los Angeles International airport, smartly dressed, waiting for a flight to Phoenix, Arizona, which she did not board. But when she was found on Tuesday in Glendale, 25 miles from the airport, she "looked like a trans-



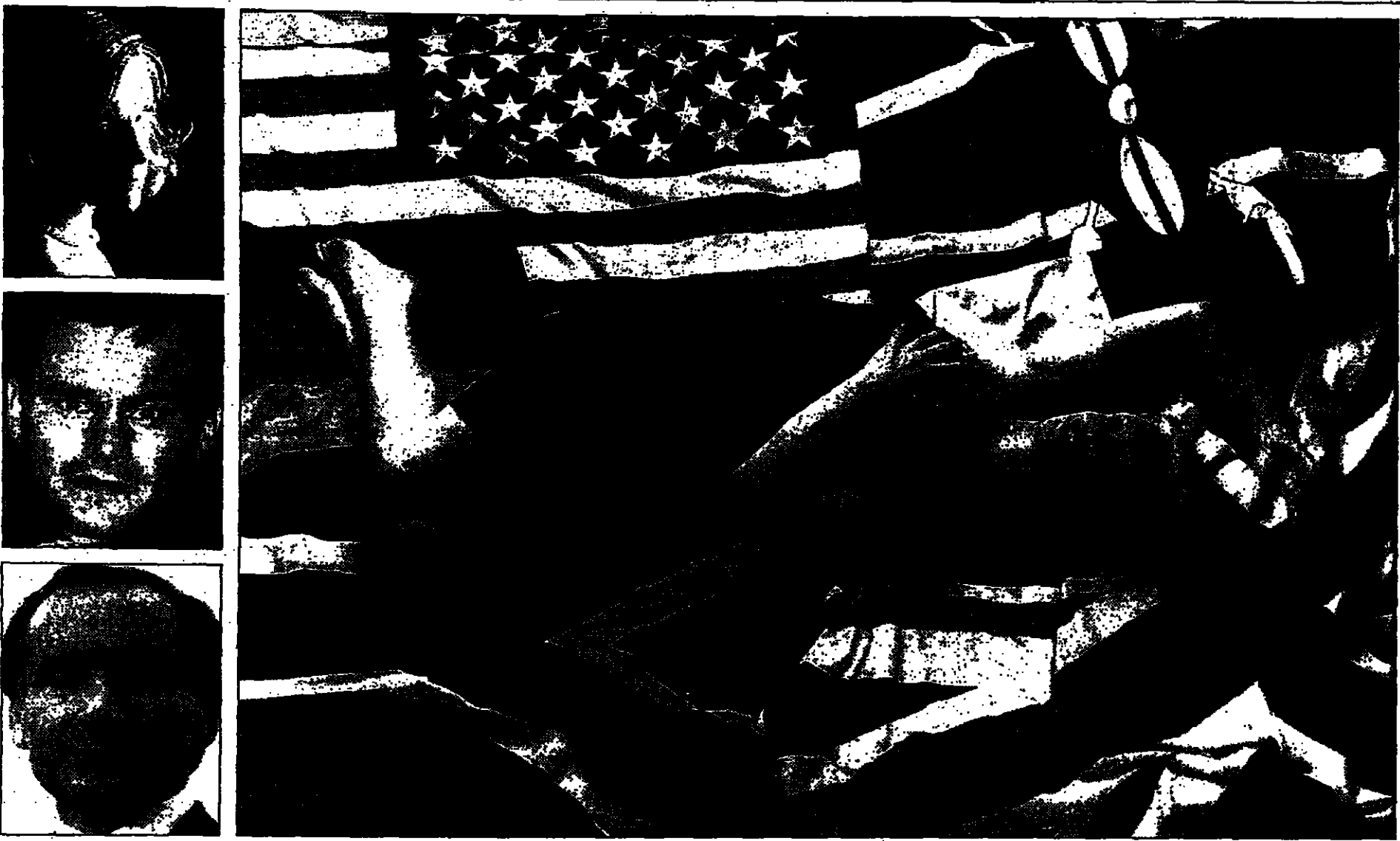
Margot Kidder: Suffered health problems for years

sient a hobo", William Minarik, who saw her then, said. Her hair had been crudely cut off. Detectives are waiting to interview her in detail but so far do not believe she was abducted. The Canadian-born actress, who became famous in 1978 with the first of the four Superman films where she starred opposite Christopher Reeve, has made more than 30 films and TV shows. Her best-known role other than Superman's girlfriend, which she last played in 1986, was in The Amityville Horror in 1979. An accident in 1980 while filming a television series left her occasionally confined to a wheelchair, with persistent and intense pain from neck injuries. In 1992 Ms Kidder told People magazine that she was taking painkillers but they left her mind "muddled". Surgery eventually cured her neck problems but her insurance company refused to pay the bills, which went into six figures, and the financial crisis pushed her into near bankruptcy. The magazine said she was broke and living in a small flat in Hollywood. Her Superman co-star Christopher Reeve is now in a wheelchair, paralysed from the neck down after a show-jumping accident almost a year ago.

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Above: The Good Sex Guide Abroad (presenter, Margi Clarke) breached taste and decency rules and ITC rejected its classification as an education programme

Top left: The Politician's Wife, with Juliet Stephenson, was Channel 4's gripping tale of modern morals

Middle left: The robust comedy of Jack Dee's Saturday Night provoked many complaints

'Little sign of high quality' in Police, Camera, Action! (presenter, Alastair Stewart) which relied on police traffic videos

Predominance of flashing blue lights on schedules earns ITV censure

Andrew Culf
Media Correspondent

ITV schedules are becoming dominated by entertainment shows at the expense of documentary and arts output, the Independent Television Commission warned yesterday.

It criticised the network for being too heavily reliant on blue flashing lights with an excess of real-life and fictional crime programmes.

The regional ITV companies were told not to jeopardise the future of local programming through mergers and co-production deals.

Channel 4 avoided further censure over taste and decency issues but was criticised for relying too heavily on American imports and repeats.

Launching the commission's annual performance reviews, its new chief executive, Peter Rogers, said ITV was at risk of narrowing its output to a more popular agenda.

The review said: "The ITC identifies a noticeable shift in the overall balance of the schedule towards more entertainment-led programmes. The network schedule contained a higher level of drama, entertainment and light factual programming and less documentary and arts output, and the less obviously popular programming, such as education, religion and arts, was often in the margin of the schedule."

Mr Rogers said: "We are not opposed to entertaining programmes, but it is a matter of balance. We think the balance has shifted and is approaching, or is at the limits of where it should be."

In 1995, drama output had increased by 27 minutes a week and entertainment by 46 minutes. Mr Rogers said too many documentaries, concentrated on crime or leisure topics.

The overall quality of ITV's drama was praised, but the focus on drama and factual programmes was said to be too frequently on police work and crime.

Carlton's *Police, Camera, Action!*, presented by Alastair Stewart, showed little sign of quality and consisted largely of traffic police video recordings, the commission said.

A two-hour ITN special, *Police, Action, Live*, designed to show police at work on a Saturday night was also criticised.

Mr Rogers said: "With this programme everyone was waiting around for something to happen and it never did... all the drunks stayed at home and watched it... We have nothing against cheap programming if it works well, but some of it is a bit tacky. The amount of police and crime shows is near its limit."

Clive Jones, chief executive of Carlton UK Television, said *Police, Camera, Action!*, which featured car chases and motorway madness, attracted 16 million viewers and had been commended by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

"The criticism is a little silly — we only make six a year and they have to be seen in the context of ITV's factual output, including *Network First*, *World in Action*, and *3D*."

Leslie Hill, chairman of the

ITV end of year report

Performance of the Independent TV companies in 1995

Anglia High quality local news but some loss of regional identity. Disappointing drama.	Border Regional service maintained strong appeal to viewers.
Carlton Promising developments in network drama and factual programmes; high quality regional service.	Central Improved performance with high quality output for region.
Channel 4 Very satisfactory service.	Grampian A successful year.
Channel 5 High quality local news and factual programmes; high quality regional service.	ITV Channel 4's <i>Police, Camera, Action!</i> and <i>World in Action</i> were regional highlights. Channel 5's <i>Police, Camera, Action!</i> was a success.
ITV High quality local news and factual programmes; high quality regional service.	Meridian High quality local news and factual programmes; high quality regional service.
LWT High quality local news and factual programmes; high quality regional service.	TV-am High quality local news and factual programmes; high quality regional service.
UTV High quality local news and factual programmes; high quality regional service.	W High quality local news and factual programmes; high quality regional service.
GMTV High quality local news and factual programmes; high quality regional service.	Channel 4 Sharp increase in repeats; but original drama improved noticeably and distinctive current affairs output.

Source: Independent Television Commission

ITV Association, said crime shows had an enduring popularity: "A schedule which is strong on entertainment is extremely popular with viewers."

The commission said the Saturday night schedule, dominated by *Gladstair*, *Baywatch*, and *Blind Date* — was "rather tired".

Mr Rogers said regional programming had been the founding stone upon which the network was constructed. The increasing number of co-productions could dilute local content, he said.

"It is a significant and welcome shift, related to mergers and acquisitions," he added. "Companies coming

together see this as a relatively easy way to produce programmes."

Sir Michael Bishop, chairman of Channel 4, praised for its high general standards and distinctive character, said progress was being made to reduce the high level of repeats.

"However, the present im-

balance is the direct result of the funding formula, which has already diverted some £169 million in just three years out of programmes to the shareholders of ITV."

1995 Performance Reviews, ITC Information Office, 33 Foley Street, London, W1P 7LB; 0171 255 3000.

Saudi prince's warning raises British export fears

Roger Cowe

BRITISH businesses are preparing for further fallout from the diplomatic row with Saudi Arabia, after a warning yesterday from the interior minister, Prince Nayef, that his government can turn to friendly countries rather than buying British.

An impending \$200 million order for Challenger tanks, to be built by Vickers, is considered vulnerable to the squabble over Saudi dissident Mohammed Al-Mas'ari, whose deportation from Britain was blocked by the Court of Appeal last month.

Prince Nayef said Saudi Arabia did not attempt to impose its views on any country, but was free to shop elsewhere if Britain proved unfriendly.

"We can distinguish a friend from an enemy and recognise who wants to keep his interests with us and who does not care about these interests. And we can find what we need anywhere in the world. We say that a friend does not harm his friend."

Prince Nayef told a London-based Saudi newspaper.

He attacked people in the media and in Parliament for

what he described as hatred against the country and its religion. "They say our country is unstable and shaky, thus hurting the interests of the kingdom," he said.

"Certainly this is not friendly behaviour. They repeat old lies, and this means there is hatred against the kingdom."

His comments raised fears for Britain's £1.6 billion exports to Saudi Arabia. The Department of Trade and Industry has insisted there is no discrimination against British suppliers, but business sources say contracts have virtually dried up.

On Tuesday Babcock, the engineering construction group, said it had abandoned attempts to win business in Saudi Arabia after it had become clear that contracts were not going to be awarded. A source said: "No matter what the DTI or the Saudis say, there is a de facto ban on UK contractors."

Robin Montgomery, of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, said: "Tendering in the Middle East is a far more political than an economic thing. Lower bids don't necessarily win, and the Saudis can go wherever they like."

In the past, British businesses benefited from

this political influence on decisions, often being preferred for defence contracts to US manufacturers who were implicated in supplying Israel. But British defence sources said Vickers' hopes of winning a contract for 150 Challenger tanks could be dashed by the current tension.

Vickers insisted it was not involved in politics, but a defence source said the company feared the row could let in the French group, GIAT.

Britain had attempted to soothe Saudi fears about opposition activity in this country by attempting to deport Mr Mas'ari, who fled to Britain last year and is applying for political asylum. But his move to the Caribbean island of Dominica was blocked by the appeal court. Last week the Government announced that Mr Mas'ari could stay for four years.

Matters were not improved by a BBC programme on human rights in Saudi Arabia, broadcast in the Middle East, which featured an interview with Mr Mas'ari. The BBC's contract to transmit its Arabic service to the country was promptly cancelled by Orbit Communications, the Italian company chaired by a cousin of Saudi King Fahd.

Labour waives rules to help Howarth win seat

Patrick Wintour, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Labour leadership cleared the way yesterday for Alan Howarth, the Conservative MP who defected to Labour last October, to find a safe seat to contest at the general election.

The national executive committee voted on this occasion to waive rules requiring parliamentary candidates to have been party members for at least two years.

Mr Howarth said later that he was delighted Labour had been kind enough to give him the chance to represent the party in the next parliament.

The decision to waive the rules in his case was taken by 15 votes to five with Clare Short leading the argument that the party needed to encourage other Tory defectors. She added that Mr Howarth had taken a brave decision to abandon the safe seat of Stratford upon Avon.

Mr Howarth now faces a tough struggle to win a nomination from one of the 20 or so remaining Labour safe seats which have not yet selected candidates. In most of these seats, Mr Howarth's chances of winning a one-member

and selection is not due to start until late this year.

There is also speculation that an older Labour MP currently planning to fight the next election will be willing to stand down at the last minute, possibly in exchange for a seat in the Lords, to create a sudden vacancy. The national executive committee could then draw up a shortlist for the local party including Mr Howarth or alternatively impose Mr Howarth.

In a sign of the NEC's powers to control parliamentary selections, it voted 14-12 with two abstentions to back the Labour leader Tony Blair's call not to re-run a controversial ballot in Swindon North, but instead set up an NEC panel to select the candidate. The case — the subject of costly legal action supported by the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union on behalf of its candidate — prompted claims that leadership was being in an unprecedented way to stop the working class AEEU candidate Jim D'Avilla in favour of Michael Wills, a metropolitan television producer and personal friend of Gordon Brown. The NEC decided that Swindon North was too divided to conduct a fair ballot.

one-vote ballot are low either because sitting MPs are likely to be re-elected or local favourite sons have been nursing the seats for too long to be pushed aside.

"I hope local parties will be kind enough to give me a chance to put my case to them," he said yesterday. "I have always been a one nation politician who supports social justice and the development of policies that are tough minded enough to work."

"I find the Labour Party offers that combination of social justice and efficiency in a way that the Conservatives do not."

He insisted that if he was not selected by any local party, "I would not be so unduly arrogant to believe that there is something amiss in the Labour Party". He said Labour members had been "wonderfully welcoming and very generous to him".

Mr Howarth asserted there was no substance in rumours that he would be imposed on a local party.

But he has already been linked to the one time mining seat of Wentworth in Yorkshire where some senior local party officials believe there is no strong internal candidate

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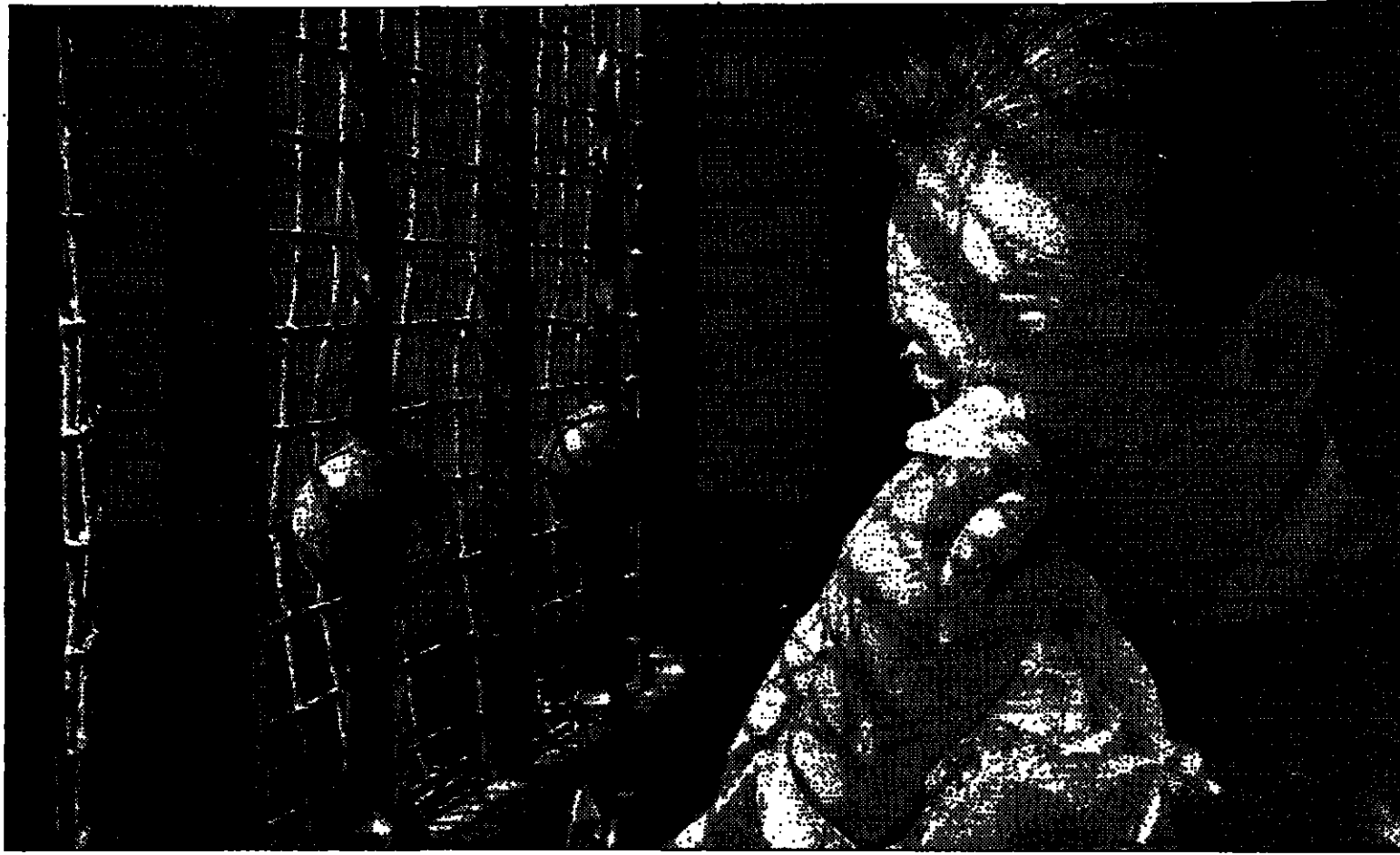
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Principal voices disquiet while 'racist' rants



Chris Brand: 'My book is being suppressed by a total idiot, a fat cat, politically-correct New Yorker sitting on millions of pounds'

Erlend Clouston on a matter of opinion

EDINBURGH university yesterday waded into the treacherous waters surrounding its self-proclaimed "scientific racist" Chris Brand.

in the headlines in a most unwelcome way. Up to 40 of the 60-strong third-year honours class have withdrawn from lectures given by Mr Brand, in protest at his linking, in his book The g Factor, IQ deficiency to poverty and the Afro-Caribbean race.

university was displeased. Sir Stewart said. But it was not what Mr Brand had written so much as the way in which he had "reportedly" articulated it in the public prints afterwards.

Stewart insisted, however, that it would be illegal to "suppress" academic freedom in this way, even if he, personally, found Mr Brand's theories "false and obnoxious".

Brand roared. "It's being suppressed by a total effing idiot, a fat cat, politically-correct New Yorker sitting on millions of pounds, and you guys had better effing get him, OK?"

self, if that's what he wants". The 58-year-old's academic fate now depends on an inquiry into his teaching relationship with the third year honours class, most of whom are now boycotting his lectures.

Oflot chief 'knew about corruption'

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent

PETER Davis, the National Lottery regulator, knew about bribery and corruption scandals in the US involving the American company GTECH, part of the Camelot consortium, before he awarded it the contract to run the lottery.

and Angela Eagle, Labour MP for Wallasey, about court cases involving GTECH. He declined to answer. Mr Davis admitted he knew that J David Smith, former national sales manager of GTECH, was prosecuted in Kentucky over money paid to the director of finance of the state of Kentucky.

He nearly lost his job four months ago after taking five free flights from GTECH during an American trip before they won the contract to provide the equipment for the Scratchcard game.

He added under further questioning: "On the day I awarded the contract to Camelot... I asked Sir Ron Darling, then chairman [of Camelot] to come and see me. I wanted him to be aware that I knew and to make absolutely sure he ran a regime within Camelot which attracted nothing untoward happened."

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Auction of Queen's letters breaches informal ban

Owen Bowcott

THREE handwritten letters punctuated with exclamation marks from the youthful Princess Elizabeth will be auctioned today in defiance of an informal ban on the sale of post-war royal correspondence.



'Lillbet' as she was in 1947, the year she married Philip for me to say anything about it officially.

told me afterwards it was most unanimous and touching and you can now get married with our hearty approval". Royal displeasure with the press is a recurrent theme.

Royal complaint over '£2.2bn fortune' upheld

Andrew Culf Media Correspondent

THE first complaint by the Queen to the Press Complaints Commission, over an article estimating her fortune at £2.2 billion, was upheld yesterday.

"The article presented speculation as established fact, the magazine failed adequately to check its facts and made a number of errors which were not properly addressed."

Age had drawn up a league table of Britain's richest 500 people, showing the Queen leaping into it ahead of her husband.

New bid to close mortgage fraud loophole

Claire Dyer Legal Correspondent

MORTGAGE fraudsters are escaping prosecution because the Government has not closed a loophole in the law, the law reform body for England and Wales warned yesterday.

"The commission said it was particularly concerned that Parliament, which last year implemented 10 of its reports, had taken no action on its call in 1994 for a two-clause amendment to the Theft Act aimed at closing a major lacuna in criminal law."

Theft Act, which deals with obtaining property by deception. "But there is substantial argument as to whether receiving funds by some electronic device is obtaining property by deception."

mers go court on beef ban

emusic festival bars over traffic

HOLI THE FRONT PAGE

DON'T THROW IT AWAY

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page.

Farmers go to court on EU beef ban

Stephen Bates in Brussels and Paul Brown

THE National Farmers Union is to challenge the legality of the ban on exports of British beef in the High Court today.

The case is an attempt to get a fast track to the European Court so that the world-wide ban by the European Union can be overturned.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Customs and Excise, against whom the case today is directed, are expected not to resist the application for a judicial review of the legality of the ban, so securing a referral to the European Court as early as next week.

The legal advice is the same as that given to the British government: that the Commission did not have the legal power to stop the export because public health was not threatened. In essence, it was admitted by the commission that British beef was safe to eat.

However, it could still take weeks and probably months before the European Court makes a judgment. The NFU case is separate from the one promised by the Prime Minister last week, which has so far not reached the courts.

Despite the apparent co-operation between the farmers and the ministry over the case, tempers are getting frayed on the issue of selective slaughter of herds. The NFU has still not been consulted about plans for culling herds with BSE, despite the fact that both the European Union and farmers are demanding the plan is made public.

In an hour-long meeting with John Major yesterday the farmers' union said members were anxious for full in-

formation on how the schemes would operate. The NFU stressed it "still remained totally opposed to any widespread cull of cattle... There is no scientific basis for public or animal health grounds for such a scheme."

The commission also stepped up the pressure on Britain to produce new measures to resolve the crisis. Jacques Santer, the commission president, warned John Major that the Government would have to give written details of its proposals by the weekend.

Mr Santer's intervention to emphasise the urgency of the situation came amid continuing concern in Brussels about British complacency over the need to secure agreement with other member states in order to lift the ban on exports.

It was said the plans had to be produced "today rather than tomorrow" if they were to have any chance of being adopted.

If Britain does not come up with proposals for more culling, it was being stressed, there will be no agreement at next Monday's meeting of EU agriculture ministers in Luxembourg, and proposals to lift the ban would have to wait a further month.

Senior officials in Brussels made clear that Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Secretary, will have to divulge Britain's plans for culling cattle within the next 48 hours to give time for Franz Fischler, the agriculture commissioner, to assess whether the British proposals are enough to win his backing.

Klaus van der Pae, the commission's chief spokesman said: "It is absolutely necessary that the British government present a well-defined programme."

Dealer makes 'no questions' offer amid hopes Dunblane tragedy will spur arms handover



Gun dealers Mike and Susan Andrews in their shop near Skipton, North Yorkshire

Shop for illegal weapons

POSSESSORS of illegal guns who do not want to hand them into the police are being offered a no-questions-asked deal to have them "de-activated" by a North Yorkshire gun-shop owner.

Michael Andrews said last night that he was offering his confidential service to encourage those people who would be uneasy handing weapons into the police despite the amnesty announced yesterday.

Mr Andrews, who has been a gun dealer for 22 years, was speaking at his shop in Cowling, near Skipton, north Yorkshire, where he has traded for over six years.

"I put the advertisement in the window soon afterwards. During this amnesty I expect to take in at least two dozen unregistered guns, no questions asked."

His actions are being encouraged by the Gun Trader Association which has asked the Home Office to include gun shops as places to hand in firearms during the amnesty.

But the offer has been rejected. It is argued the guns would remain in circulation. A Home Office spokesman added: "There are legal problems which also make this impossible."

Amnesty expected to net thousands of guns

Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

THE Government hopes that thousands of illegally held weapons will be surrendered in a month-long amnesty to be held from June 3 in the wake of the Dunblane tragedy.

The amnesty, announced by the Home Secretary yesterday, will mean weapons can be handed in without questions being asked or fear of prosecution, unless there is strong evidence that the gun has been used in a recent crime. It will operate in England, Wales and Scotland, but not Northern Ireland, and will also cover ammunition, grenades, electric stun guns, and CS gas and pepper sprays.

Michael Howard openly acknowledged that he did not hold high expectations that armed criminals would surrender their guns. But every weapon given up "is one fewer that can be stolen and used by criminals. Taking part in the amnesty is something that will reduce the risks of guns falling into the wrong hands."

The last amnesty was held in the aftermath of the Hungerford massacre in 1988 and nearly 48,000 weapons were handed in. More than 300,000

would urge everybody, particularly families who may have inherited weapons, to look in the attics or garden sheds and hand into the police any weapons that they may find.

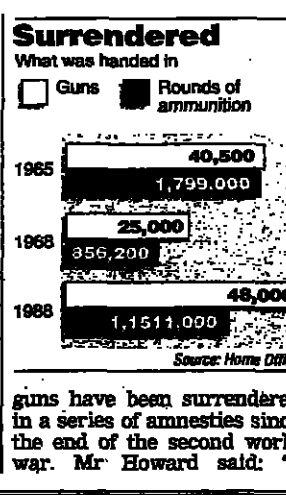
It is believed that there are still a significant number of unlicensed war souvenirs or trophies held privately, including some brought back from Bosnia and from the Gulf.

Mr Howard also urged people who suspected someone of holding illegal weapons to report them anonymously through the Crimestoppers freephone number, 0800 555111.

Most of the guns surrendered will be melted down, but a few rare or historical items may be handed over to museums.

The official inquiry into the Dunblane massacre, chaired by Lord Cullen, will begin to take evidence next week. The Cabinet will wait for the outcome later this year before deciding about wider reform of the gun laws. The Government is expected only to outline a range of options in reply to the calls for a complete ban on the possession of handguns when it submits its evidence to the Cullen inquiry next week.

Firearms experts gave a cautious welcome to the amnesty yesterday, but questioned whether it would go



very far in reducing the estimated pool of 1 million illegally held weapons.

"An amnesty will have a small and beneficial effect but it won't really impact on the bad boys," said Michael Yardley, a firearms expert. "It's not an answer to the problem."

Police were last night interviewing a man aged 41 in Liverpool after a grenade was found among a small arsenal of weapons, and some drugs, in a house in Garston, writes *Maryn Halliell*.

The cache included two hand guns, a sub-machine gun, 200 rounds of ammunition, and loaded hand gun magazines.

Dance music festival halted by fears over traffic jams

Alex Bellon

THE music world was stunned last night by the cancellation of one of the year's biggest festivals, Tribal Gathering, after police objected to the volume of traffic it would cause.

Magistrates at Thame refused to grant a licence to the Oxfordshire event, which has sold all 25,000 tickets, despite assurances by the organisers that they would supply 51 buses to ferry people to and from the site.

Tribal Gathering was due to have been at Otmoor Park, Beckley, next weekend and was the country's premier dance music festival with a line-up including Black Grape, Leftfield, Underworld and Goldie. It was seen by many as filling the gap caused by the absence of Glastonbury this year.

Joint organisers Universe

and Mean Fiddler have provisionally rescheduled the event for July 6. They intend to appeal.

Melvyn Benn, of Mean Fiddler, who has been putting on outdoor festivals for almost 20 years, said: "I am staggered. The decision is the most illogical I have ever known."

Paul Shurey, of Universe, said: "Coming a day after it was announced that The Who will play to 150,000 people in Hyde Park in the middle of the tourist season and traffic was not presented as a problem, it makes me very angry."

"Other events are given licences in Otmoor Park. People don't seem to be able to put up with dance parties."

A senior Thames Valley police officer told Thame magistrates that the disruption to local traffic was unacceptable. He said last year's Tribal Gathering, the first at that location, caused eight-mile tailbacks into Oxford.

McGuinness sees 'no point' in new ceasefire

David Sharrock Ireland Correspondent

HOPES that the IRA will call a new ceasefire preceded yesterday when the leading republican, Martin McGuinness, said that there was no point in attempting to seek one against the background of 17 months of British bad faith.

In comments that will embarrass other nationalist leaders, Mr McGuinness said the IRA would not accept a ceasefire which was not permanent and that anybody connected with the peace process had never been under any illusions about that.

Mr McGuinness was speaking after the cessation of a further distance between himself and Sinn Fein by announcing that not only will it take part in the May 30 elections but will also take seats in an Ulster forum, running in tandem with all-party talks on the province's future.

Sinn Fein views the forum as a partitionist six-county body. But with deep divisions between Gerry Adams and the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, and now the SDLP move, the "non-nationalist front" which was such an essential element in getting the IRA to lay down its arms appears to be in tatters.

Mr McGuinness gave a

gloomy view of the situation. "Certainly at the moment, against the background of 17 months of British bad faith, there's no prospect whatsoever of a restoration of the ceasefire unless we can be in a position to go to the IRA and convince them that we are going to have real and meaningful peace negotiations," he told BBC Radio Ulster.

Returning to the starting point in September 1994, when John Major said he first had to be satisfied about the permanence of the IRA ceasefire, Mr McGuinness said: "I've always made it clear — and this was a point which was missed during the course of the ceasefire — that what

we achieved whenever the IRA called the cessation in August 1994 wasn't a permanent cessation... responsibility for making that cessation a permanent cessation lay with Unionist politicians, British government politicians, Irish government politicians, ourselves, the SDLP, and all the political parties."

This drew a tart reaction from the Ulster Unionist deputy leader, John Taylor. ("Sinn Fein) always said it

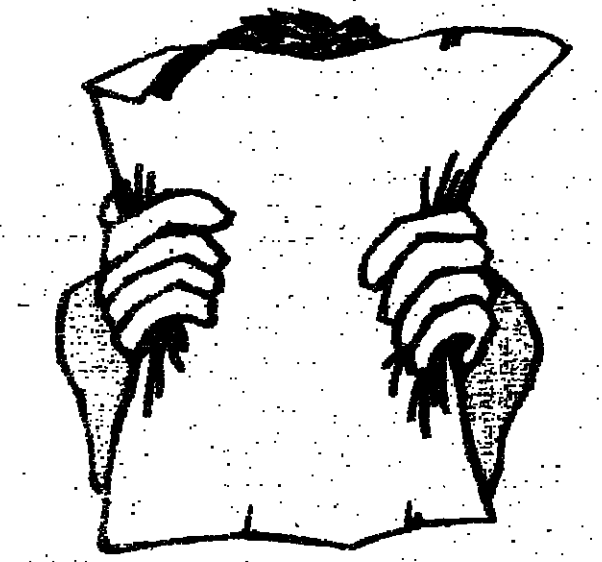
was meant to be permanent. Albert Reynolds (the former Irish prime minister) always said it was permanent. It shows how they have all been misleading us."

The SDLP announcement that it will take its seats in a Northern Ireland forum surprised Unionists and boosted the Government's plans. Last week the SDLP indicated it wanted the proposed forum scrapped. But the Government's determination to

reject Unionist amendments giving the forum a larger role in the talks process appeared to have brought about a change of heart.

That clearly angered Sinn Fein, and Mr Adams confirmed within hours of the SDLP's announcement that his party too would be contesting the May 30 elections, even though its boycott of the forum remains. However Mr Adams denied the SDLP vote face left Sinn Fein isolated.

HOLD THE FRONT PAGE!



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Protest stops soccer video

Gary Younge

THE production of a football video featuring scenes of drunken hooligans and pitch invasions was suspended yesterday after complaints from the former England goalkeeper Gordon Banks that he had been misled about its content when he agreed to appear in it.

The video, *Hooligan '96*, is narrated by former England actor Leslie Grantham, who was released in time for the build-up to this summer's European football championship, to be held in England.

One man in the video spells out the threat of crowd violence, marring Euro '96 and boasts that hooligans will target ordinary supporters.

The video also contains speculation on which championship games are most likely to involve violence.

Mr Banks, aged 58, says he had no idea that the video would concentrate on these issues. "I thought I was going to talk about the way the game has changed since I was a player. All I said was that if there was violence it would make it difficult and we could get banned from Europe and the next World Cup." He claims positive comments he made about how the police dealt with soccer crowds were cut from the finished video.

John Williams, an academic from the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research at Loughborough univer-

sity, who appears in the video, is also said to be angry at the biased manner in which the film was cut. "Only about five minutes [of my two-hour interview] was spent on hooliganism but it appears that is the only part they have used. I am very angry that I have been used and misled by this film company," Mr Williams said.

Pearson New Entertainment said it was suspending production of the video "for the time being" to be satisfied that criticisms were unfounded and that statements attributed to Mr Banks had been misrepresented.

A company spokesman said yesterday: "*Hooligan '96* is a documentary which takes a responsible look at the issue of football hooliganism."



Gordon Banks... positive comments cut from video

United ready to toast victory with its own club whisky

Viviek Chaudhary

FOOTBALL'S Premier League title is almost theirs and a place in the FA Cup final is guaranteed.

But should it all go horribly wrong, Manchester United fans at least will be able to console themselves with a drop of "Manchester United Premium Blend" whisky.

At £10.99 a bottle — complete with Red Devil crest — and made by Scottish distillery Inver Gordon, it will be sold in bars at Old Trafford and in supermarkets and off-licences.

The club's marketing activities currently generate around £23.5 million a year. Danny McGregor, Manchester United's commercial manager, said: "The whisky is available in all of our corporate hospitality suites and will be well supported through advertising and targeted direct marketing."

A consignment has already been bought for export to Thailand, confirming for most Manchester City supporters that United are more popular outside Manchester than within.

Alcohol watchdogs fear that young fans will try the whisky because it carries the club's name and colours. "With a club as big as Manchester United there is a clamour for their products," said Mark Bennett, of Alcohol Concern.

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6 WORLD NEWS

News in brief

International gangs turn to EU fraud

DEFRAUDING the European Union is becoming easier and more lucrative for international criminals than dealing in drugs, the European Parliament president, Klaus Haensch, said yesterday.

"International criminals understand that they can make more money by concentrating on subsidies in the Union than on heroin trafficking," he said after a two-day conference on EU fraud. "Organised crime realised long ago that fraud involving cigarettes, sugar, milk powder or beef is more profitable and also less risky than trafficking in heroin."

Fraud cost the EU 1 billion Ecu (2000 billion) in 1994. Anita Gradin, the commissioner responsible for fighting fraud, said it was perpetrated almost entirely by big criminal groups and increasingly involved gangs operating in central and eastern Europe.

Tricksters might claim phony export refunds or subsidies for non-existent olive trees. In "transit fraud", goods were diverted and sold illegally to avoid paying duties and taxes at the end of the journey. — *Reuter, Brussels.*

Ciller faces inquiry

THE Turkish parliament voted yesterday to investigate Tansu Ciller, the former prime minister, for corruption.

The inquiry — prompted by allegations from the pro-Islamic Welfare Party — could imperil the six-week coalition government of Mesut Yilmaz, who is backed by Mrs Ciller. Under their power-sharing arrangement, Mrs Ciller is due to regain the premiership next year. The investigation could lead to her prosecution in a supreme court, blocking her return as prime minister.

The Welfare Party has accused Mrs Ciller of ordering the energy department to favour certain companies in a public tender for a contract worth \$200,000. She has denied the charges. The Democratic Left Party, led by the former prime minister Bulent Ecevit, which supports the minority coalition, is also preparing its demand for an inquiry into Mrs Ciller's privatisation of state shares in the Tofas car company. The allegations were initially raised by Motherland. — *AP, Ankara.*

Communists to back Prodi

ITALY'S hardline Communist Refoundation party said yesterday it expected a share of some of parliament's key posts in return for helping the new government to take office.

The centre-left Olive Tree alliance won a clear victory in Sunday's general election, but it will need help from the Communists in the Chamber of Deputies, where it fell just short of an absolute majority.

"We will not be in the government majority but we will help the government to be born," Fausto Bertinotti, head of Communist Refoundation, said. "But from the outset I think this position should be recognised in the parliamentary commissions and in the appointment of the presidents of the upper and lower houses of parliament."

The Olive Tree, a broad coalition of centrist and leftist parties led by the economics professor, Romano Prodi, forged a tactical electoral alliance with the Communists but shares few of their policy goals. Commentators say the first real test of his relationship with Mr Bertinotti will come when the 1997 budget bill is presented in September. — *Reuter, Rome.*

Smuggled arms to Croatia

IRAN and Croatia signed a secret military co-operation agreement last December that included an Iranian proposal to deliver surface-to-air missiles to Sarajevo and Zagreb and a plan to exchange Croatian and Iranian military personnel, senior Croatian officials and western diplomats said this week.

The agreement, signed after the Bosnian peace accord was reached in Dayton, Ohio, was never made public by either the Croatians or the Americans. The pact, viewed by diplomats here as part of Tehran's efforts to deepen ties with Bosnia and Croatia, was blocked when Washington learned of it in December.

"The deal was not like the [war-time] arms shipments, told to us in advance," a US official said. "As soon as we heard about it, we made sure it was stopped."

The effort to establish formal military links with Zagreb, coming after the smuggling of Iranian arms through Croatian territory, alarmed US officials. They were also distressed to learn that Iran offered to supply Zagreb and Sarajevo with surface-to-air missiles that were capable of hitting Belgrade from either Zagreb or Sarajevo.

The Clinton administration did not oppose the Iranian arms deliveries, officials here said, because it believed they would aid Bosnian Muslim fighters fight heavy attacks from Bosnian Serb forces, and hold together the federation between Croats and the Bosnian Muslims. — *New York Times, Zagreb.*

Doctors strike in Paris

Family doctors and specialists marched in protest in Paris and other cities yesterday during a strike against government plans to limit health care by forcing GPs to cut prescriptions and consultations.

The protest coincided with a cabinet meeting to complete social security reforms which caused national public sector strikes last autumn. But doctors said they were being penalised because of the main budgetary and social ambitions of the prime minister, Alain Juppé, had failed. Mr Juppé's social security plans depend on reducing the deficit to about \$2 billion but new forecasts say the real loss on health, pensions and family allowances payouts will reach nearly \$8 billion this year.

Several proposed changes, including cuts in civil service pensions and taxation of child allowances, were dropped after weeks of industrial unrest. But MPs yesterday voted on a policy switch in which the social security system will be controlled by parliament instead of under ministerial instructions.

President Jacques Chirac congratulated Mr Juppé for guiding through changes including a special income tax, higher contribution rates, a freeze on allowances and bigger hospital charges. Doctors said the government's latest measures amounted to health care rationing. — *Paul Webster, Paris.*



Reconciled... Paraguay's rebel general, Lino Oviedo, embraces President Juan Carlos Wasmosy in Asunción yesterday after relinquishing the army command. He is to become defence minister. PHOTOGRAPH: EDUARDO DE BARRA

Militias clash in Mogadishu

HEAVY fighting between rival militias in the south of the Somali capital Mogadishu left 13 people dead and 33 wounded yesterday, witnesses and hospitals said.

The fighting between militias loyal to General Mohammed Farrah Aided and Osman Hassan Ali, who goes by the nom de guerre of Atto, was concentrated in the area near the port known as Bostna, because of snipers there in the past. — *AP, Mogadishu.*

Money pours in for maid

A FILIPINO tycoon has offered \$27,000 to Sarah Balabagan, the Filipino maid found guilty of killing her employer in the United Arab Emirates, and a French group is providing \$38,500 for her education. The maid, aged 17, was sentenced to death. She said she killed him in self-defence when he tried to rape her. After an international outcry, an appeals court overturned the death penalty and sentenced her to one year in prison. — *AP, Manila.*



Highest bidding... Diana Brooks hears offers for a chair owned by President John F. Kennedy at the Sotheby's auction of the estate of Jacqueline Onassis. PHOTOGRAPH: TIMOTHY CLARY

Jackie O auction beats all records

For the fans, no price is too high to pay for even the humblest belongings of the former first lady. Jonathan Freedland reports

THE auction of Jackie Kennedy Onassis's worldly goods set new records last night and justified advance hype as the sale of the century.

As the New York auction of the Onassis collection entered its second day, 2,000 Jackie wannabes in Sotheby's New York sale room were reduced to stunned gasps as even a set of cups and saucers — valued at just over \$100 (275) — sold for 90 times that price.

Sotheby's exceeded all expectations with a first night take of \$4.5 million, generated by just 100 of the 1,195 lots on offer. Most was fetched by a walnut cigar humidor, a 1961 roadster and a 1962 Buick Wildcat. The final lot — Mrs Onassis's metallic-green 1992 BMW — is sold tomorrow, the Kennedy collection could yield a record-breaking \$50 million, if not more.

Crowds had descended on Sotheby's since last Friday, when 15,000 winners of a special lottery were allowed

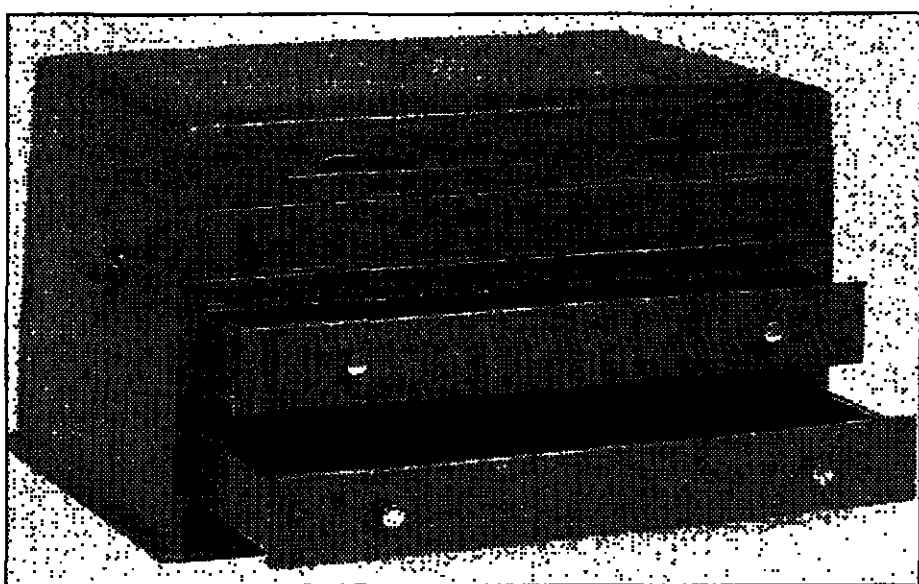
\$442,500, and a baby grand piano that once sat in Mrs Onassis's Fifth Avenue apartment went for \$167,500. Even a tape measure — monogrammed and silver-plated — surpassed its \$500 estimate and was bought for \$48,875.

"It's incredible," Sotheby's president, Diana Brooks, said. "It just shows you how people feel about their history."

Yesterday's big prize was a French textbook used by the young Jacqueline Bouvier. The book, containing doodles and sketches of dress designs, drew a top bid of \$37,000.

Sotheby's has already passed its estimated total of \$5 million. By the time the final lot — Mrs Onassis's metallic-green 1992 BMW — is sold tomorrow, the Kennedy collection could yield a record-breaking \$50 million, if not more.

Crowds had descended on Sotheby's since last Friday, when 15,000 winners of a special lottery were allowed



Top drawer: This walnut humidor, owned by President Kennedy, sold for \$574,500

to file past — at a rate of 750 an hour — the baubles and mementos of the former first lady, who died two years ago. They admired the jewellery, engravings and furniture of a woman revered as an icon of elegance and grace.

Proof of Mrs Onassis's cult status has come in the fanfare that has greeted the sale. More than 87,000 Americans have bought the 584-page auction catalogue, priced \$90 in paperback, and 70,000 hopefuls have faxed in absentee bids

on a special JKO Hotline. Predicted favourites are the souvenirs from the Camelot days in the White House, including the Louis XVI desk on which he signed the 1958 nuclear test ban treaty and a black leather bag of golf

clubs, monogrammed JFK. John Jr's high chair and daughter Caroline Kennedy's rocking horse were sold for \$85,000 a piece. One of the most sought-after items is expected to be the triple string of fake pearls which became a trademark of the first lady in 1962. Sotheby's jugged the public memory with a photo of "John-John" as a toddler, playfully tugging the pearls from his mother's neck.

Most of the items have little intrinsic value, their price inflated by what auctioneers call "celebrity provenance", the so-called Jackie Premium. The exceptions are the gifts to the former first lady from her second husband, the Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis. Chief among them is her engagement ring, dominated by the 40.42 carat Lesotho III diamond, thought to be the 11th largest ever discovered. Bidding on the ring was set to start at \$500,000.

Selection of the items was made by Mrs Onassis's children, who have set aside most of her possessions for the Kennedy presidential library in Boston. Up to 70 per cent of proceeds will go to pay off inheritance tax.

Clinton puts Dole on spot

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

BILL CLINTON challenged his presidential election rival, Senator Bob Dole, to a one-on-one summit at the White House yesterday in the latest sign of surging Democratic confidence — and Republican alarm — at Mr Clinton's increasingly healthy prospects in November's ballot.

With polls showing the president leading the ageing Mr Dole by as much as 18 per cent in the popularity stakes, and with senior Republicans admitting they could be "wiped" in the election, Mr Clinton added to his opponent's woes with a call for face-to-face talks on America's budget crisis.

"My door is open and it's time to get the job done," he said, unveiling what Democrats calculate is a no-lose strategy. If the two men agree on a plan to balance the budget within seven years, White House aides expect it to be notched up as a victory for Mr Clinton. If the stalemate continues, Mr Dole — who is both the Republican leader in the Senate and presidential candidate — will be blamed.

The budget challenge came amid evidence that Mr Clinton's lead is solidifying. One poll in the usually marginal state of Pennsylvania showed him 17 points ahead.

The last incumbent presidents with such great leads at this stage in an election year were Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan — all of whom were re-elected with increased majorities.

Even the House of Representatives Speaker, Newt Gingrich, admitted this week that Republicans were "in a funk". The party has not recovered its standing since

Flynn in trouble again with women

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE relationship between Padraig Flynn, the Irish commissioner for social affairs, and the women's committee of the European Parliament is only marginally warmer than that between Brussels and the average British beerbarman.

So when Mr Flynn, a former Irish justice minister, went before the women MEPs in Brussels yesterday to defend the downgrading of the Commission's equal opportunities unit, and the prospective halving of its budget from £50 million to £25 million, he looked as cheerful as a man going before a firing squad.

Mr Flynn has been in trouble with women before. He is famous in Ireland for insulting Mary Robinson's candidature for the presidency, claiming she was a careerist who had only discovered she had a family for vote-winning purposes. MEPs very nearly blocked his appointment when the Commission was nominated last year. He got off to a poor start again yesterday.

There was outright incredulity when he told the women that the decision to move the unit was no concern of theirs. The equal opportunities unit is being moved from the part of the Commission which deals with employment to that concerned with what is called social dialogue.

The move puts Britain outside its sphere of influence, since the Government has opted out of the social chapter.

The women's committee believes it is being downgraded.

"I don't think it would be appropriate for me to discuss it. There is no diminution of the unit," he said. As the MEPs protested, austered Mr Flynn told them not to get personal, but then added: "I didn't say it was going to be beefed up, but as of now the staff complement is not diminished."

He was little more successful in his defence of the budget. "I will fight for it but you have got to fight for it too. Don't come back to me and say that I lost, Madam Van Dijk [the Dutch chairwoman]."

As the women gasped, Neil van Dijk said: "Perhaps it is easier to do this in English so that you understand me directly. We will only succeed if the Commission takes our case seriously. We hope you will do that."

Even the closing pleasantries disintegrated. Ms Van Dijk said: "Not all our questions were satisfactorily answered." Mr Flynn snapped back: "I like to come any time I'm asked. We don't have to agree on everything. If we had to agree on everything there would be no need for me to be here at all."

Ms van Dijk said: "Somebody has to do the job." "I didn't like the way you said that," Mr Flynn answered. "Obviously we can all agree that you are doing your job and if that were not the case, you wouldn't be here." Mr Flynn said, getting the last word.

Mr Flynn will be back before the committee next month, although, as he left, he was mumbling about a busy schedule with prior engagements in Canada and the United States.

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Drive down

YOUR HOME IS

Nuclear lab faces call for inquiry

Caroline Hesson in Geneva

NEGLIGENCE at the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (Cern) has led to the site becoming contaminated with radioactivity, a nuclear protection group alleged yesterday.

The French-based Commission for Research and Independent Information On Radioactivity called for a full independent inquiry to be conducted at the site, which straddles France and Switzerland near Geneva.

The commission conducted tests inside Cern on January 20 and February 18, and found radioactive material in waste bins in public areas, with readings sometimes well above the limits imposed at Cern.

The group complained that sub-contractors managing nuclear waste at the site were given little or no training in radiation protection and had insufficient protective clothing.

The investigation followed a complaint by Pierre Allemann, an employee of a sub-contractor managing nuclear waste at Cern from 1980 to 1984. He had to leave his job after he developed lung cancer. — AP.



Looking ahead... Boris Yeltsin reviews an honour guard with Jiang Zemin, China's president in Tiananmen Square yesterday. The Russian president's visit will focus on trade, border disputes, and China's nuclear testing. PHOTOGRAPH: ALEXANDER ZEMLANICHENKO

Dudayev's death raises fears for success of Russian peace plan

Chechen rebels elect hawk as new leader

David Hearst in Moscow

DZHOKHAR Dudayev, the Chechen rebel leader who died in a Russian rocket attack on Sunday night, was buried yesterday in a rural graveyard in Chechnya, as fears grew in Moscow that his death might provoke a rebel attack on Russia itself.

After 24 hours of conflicting statements about Dudayev's fate, Shamil Basayev, a top Chechen field commander, confirmed the death on rebel television.

Mr Basayev said the rebel military council had elected Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev as the new guerrilla leader.

A post and previously Dudayev's deputy, Mr Yandarbiyev, aged 44, is known as a hardline nationalist. He formed an independence movement as early as 1989 — when Dudayev was a loyal Soviet air force general.

Upon election yesterday, Mr Yandarbiyev vowed to keep fighting for independence. Russia's Itar-Tass news agency reported.

Dudayev died in a rocket attack as he stood in a field, talking on a satellite telephone to a foreign intermediary about starting peace talks

with Boris Yeltsin, the Russian president.

The Russian commander in Chechnya, General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, denied that his forces were involved in the attack, but an interior ministry source said Dudayev was killed in retaliation for an ambush last week which killed up to 80 Russian troops.

Dudayev kept Europe's largest army at bay for 16 months. But politically his legacy is mixed. His actions provoked Moscow to invade. Some 40,000 civilians have died in the ensuing war

be on the alert, as the rebels may intensify their activity."

Mr Yeltsin launched his so-called peace initiative on March 31, after recognising that the continued loss of Russian troops was harming him in the campaign for Russia's June 16 presidential election.

Since Mr Yeltsin launched his plan to withdraw troops



the re-emergence of Dudayev's chief of staff, Aslan Maskhadov. He was the chief rebel negotiator in talks in Grozny with the Russian military, and is seen as a dove.

But there are also signs of potential splits in the top command of the Chechen separatist army. Like the mujahedin in Afghanistan, field commanders act independently of each other, although they meet to co-ordinate the fighting about twice a month.

Mr Basayev had publicly criticised Dudayev over funding for commanders in the field.

Mr Yandarbiyev's last foreign mission was to Jordan, where there is a strong Chechen diaspora. He is reported to have control of the purse strings for the rebel cause. Mr Maskhadov is popular in the villages in the east and south east of Chechnya, but in the west there are other warlords, such as Akhmed Zulkayev and Ruslan Gelayev.

Dudayev now passes into the status of a martyr for the Chechen nation. He was a superb military strategist, responsible for keeping at bay the largest army in Europe for 16 months. Politically, however, Dudayev's legacy is mixed. His actions provoked Moscow to the point where it launched its invasion of Chechnya. Over 40,000 civilians have died in the war and the country is devastated.

● Mikhail Gorbachev was punched in the face while campaigning yesterday for Russia's June 16 presidential election. The Gorbachev Foundation said. It described the assault, by an unknown man in the western Siberian city of Omsk, as "an assassination attempt", but Russian news agencies called it "hooliganism".

Russian generals were openly pinning their hopes on

from areas not involved in the fighting, more than 120 federal soldiers have died. Human rights organisations have spoken out against vicious Russian attacks on civilian villages, and the Russian military leadership has openly criticised Mr Yeltsin.

Dudayev's death further complicates the situation for Mr Yeltsin.

The first signs of the fate of the peace plan were ominous. An aide to the Tatar president, Myentyemir Shaimiev, who was to have acted as an intermediary in talks between Mr Yeltsin and Dudayev, said the Tatar president was "withdrawing from playing an active part".

Russian generals were openly pinning their hopes on

Chernobyl affects children's genes

Tim Radford Science Editor

SCIENTISTS examining the genetic fingerprints of families in the path of the radioactive plume from Chernobyl, the reactor which exploded 10 years ago today, have found mutations inherited by children born years later.

This could be the first evidence that radiation damage to one generation could enter the germ line — be passed to children and to their children.

The research, by Yuri Dubrova of the Vavilov Institute in Moscow, and Sir Alec Jeffreys, the Leicester scientist who pioneered genetic fingerprinting, is published today in the periodical Nature.

The researchers report that genetic mutations occur twice as often in children of parents exposed to the fallout.

The scientists collected blood samples from 79 families in a heavily polluted part of Belarus, to the north of the reactor. What the families had in common was that both parents had lived in the region since the accident, and that children had been born into each family between February and September 1994.

Although the researchers do not claim that the mutation was directly caused by radiation, they point out that the worse the level of caesium-137 contamination in the area, the higher the rate of mutation in local families.

"From the very beginning, we started to see that there was probably something wrong," said Dr Dubrova. "We were absolutely shocked."

But both scientists were also careful to point out that the mutations were in the part of the DNA used by forensic scientists to establish paternity, or links with crime.

These "mini-satellite" regions of DNA do not seem to be biologically important. There has been no evidence so far of germline damage to the genetic material which builds or controls cells.

The work developed years ago out of an interest in mutations in the DNA used by scientists for fingerprinting.

"To our great surprise we did indeed find an effect at really low doses of radiation," said Sir Alec.

The British scientist, Dr Dubrova and five others began examining blood samples from the families who lived in the shadow of the world's worst accidental release of radioactive material, and compared them with British families.

"What we found in the Belarus sample was evidence for approximately a doubling of the mutation rate," said Sir Alec. "The trivial explanation is that this is a remarkable statistical fluke. The obvious conclusion one would love to jump to is that the ionising radiation from the Chernobyl reactor was directly responsible for that increase in mutation."

If this is correct, it would be the first direct evidence for ionising radiation causing mutations through the generations in humans.

"But it is provisional. I have to stress that," said Sir Alec. "Because of the uniqueness and extreme importance of this disaster we have to learn as many lessons as possible. What we are really doing is calling for a greater co-ordinated effort."

The research left a critical question: did the same radiation affect other, more sensitive parts of the genetic inheritance? "We have a straight answer to this: we do not know."

● On the eve of the 10th anniversary of the world's worst nuclear disaster, firefighters at Chernobyl were keeping a close eye on the smouldering remains of a blaze that on Tuesday burned 375 acres of heavily contaminated forest and grassland, services Matthew Brzezinski in Kiev.

The full extent of radiation released from the fire in the 18-mile exclusion zone that surrounds the power station was not clear yesterday. The blaze, which claimed no victims, was probably set off by a dropped cigarette butt. About 10,000 people still live in the area which is officially uninhabitable.

According to Greenpeace representatives, readings taken by Chernobyl's Department of Radiation Monitoring showed "four to five-fold" increases in the levels of cancer-causing caesium. However, government officials and Ukrainian state television said radiation increases were "insignificant".

with women

with women

EAT WALL

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A GUIDE TO WINNING



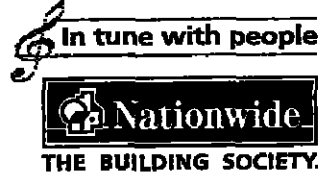
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Talent at two years old

Prep school pundits should study the research

FIRST came the soundbite politician: now enter the say-it-in-a sentence private school head. The satchel infection began in the secondary sector. Both the last two chairmen of the Headmasters' Conference (HMC), which represents 240 leading public schools, have preached populist, uninformed, sociological sermons to mothers about the emotional damage which they can cause to their children by going out to work. Tony Evans, the current chairman, has even taken to writing in the Daily Mail about middle class parents who betray their children by "paying fees" but "wash their hands of rearing and responsibility". Now soundbite disease has spread to the primary sector with Paddy Holmes, chairwoman of the Independent Schools Association Incorporated, speaking out against damage which working mothers can cause by sending children as young as two to nursery classes in prep schools. In a sentence of unseemly scrambled syntax, she declared: "Young children need a one-to-one relationship, not a one-to-eight... if I thought the human race was meant to be brought up like that, we would be born in litters like puppies, and not one at a time."

research is ambivalent. True, the biggest study in Britain, based on daycare centres rather than schools, showed children in the centres had more emotional problems, but they were already suffering from these when placed there. Prof Kathy Sylva, who reviewed research worldwide for the 1994 RSA report on nursery education, concluded high quality daycare produced positive results, low quality adverse ones. High quality programmes, such as in Sweden, have phenomenal results: "the highest performance in school tests and the best emotional adjustment was found in the children who had experienced the most daycare, even before the age of one year." What should parents do? Trust their instincts. No one is likely to know their child as well. The UK research on nursery education from the age of three is unequivocal: there are huge benefits for children, not just educationally but in developing social skills as well. But what about emotional development, particularly for the under threes? Psychoanalysts point to the crucial importance of children achieving a warm and affectionate attachment to their mother in their first year. But we also know the value of establishing other bonds as well. Good childcare achieves that. So would good early nursery education. It may only be private in the UK, but as we reported in Tuesday's Guardian Education, about one third of two-year-olds in France already attend nursery schools. French research suggests the two-year-olds do remarkably better educationally — across all classes — than the children who enter nursery classes at the age of three or four. There is a further issue for researchers: how do we stop private school heads sounding off like Daily Mail lede-writers? Perhaps it's time the parents who pay their salaries, start biting any flashing populist ankle.

Business wary of hard money

But prospects of electronic cash may come to the rescue

YESTERDAY'S thumping 69 per cent vote against a single European currency by the Institute of Directors' annual conference shouldn't be taken as an accurate barometer of industrial unrest, but it may well be a sign of things to come. The Institute has for a long time been much more Euro-sceptical than its more powerful cousin, the CBI. The IOD's Jush Pall Mall club provides a sort of industrial bathhouse where directors can let off steam. What is significant is the size of the majority and the fact that it coincides with evidence that industry is not nearly as enamoured of a single currency as it used to be. The CBI's survey last November found only a small majority in favour of EMU — a far cry from its unequivocal support a few years earlier. Since November there has been anecdotal evidence of more scepticism. Most industrialists are still strongly in favour of the single barrier-free European market and would welcome the convenience of dealing in a single currency. But the advantages of avoiding the transaction costs (commission plus the banks' profit on buying and selling) may be offset by higher commission charges on transactions as the banks try to make up for losing out on the profitable business of dealing. Every company will have to pay for the one-off conversion costs of changing all their equipment to cope with the Euro — an unnecessary expense for the thousands of small companies that don't export at all. There are fears that the

regional unemployment which a strong single currency will almost certainly generate would need large cross-frontier subsidies to stem — and these may not be forthcoming from Brussels. When the Government was trying to get itself off the hook in 1990, it dreamed up the notion of a "hard ecu", a new currency which would be guaranteed to hold its value against other currencies including the Dmark. It was hoped that other countries would seize on this Esperanto of currencies as a market-led alternative to the proposed Euro. It was also hoped that if enough companies and individuals started using it, the new currency would become the norm on the basis that good currency would drive out the bad. It got nowhere because it was so self-evidently a politically inspired solution to get Britain off the hook. But will there come a time soon when it offers a chance to get Europe off the hook? Two things have changed since 1990. First there are much wider worries in Europe about the effects of a single currency (even though the main protagonists insist that they are going ahead with it.) Second the prospects for electronic money have advanced quite dramatically: banks all over the world are preparing for it. If the banks made the hard ecu, or something similar, the currency of electronic money they might find a ready market and provide the EU with an interim solution — until we are fully grown up and ready to lock ourselves into the Euro for ever more.

Thought for the Day . . .

What on earth should be done with Thought for the Day?

THOUGHT for the Day occupies an extraordinary place in British life. It's hard to imagine any other country handing a prime-time slot on national radio to a motley crew who have varied credentials for broadcasting other than believing. For two minutes forty seconds, the faithful can glory in the illusion of authority in this country of non-believers, and hold a platform alongside those with real power. The slightest changes to the slot's brief or contributors spawn acres of comment, as evidenced by the coverage of yesterday's decision to "rest" three veterans. The slot is perceived as a barometer of the nation's beliefs. No wonder, that humanists, atheists and agnostics rail against this privileged vestige of Reithian broadcasting. It survives because it reflects that quintessentially English diffidence to religion. We like having it as part of the ritual of our lives, but only on the clear

understanding that it remains within strict limits. After a history littered with religious conflict, we are wary of anything that smacks of controversy or conviction, and above all, faith must be kept well away from politics — as Tony Blair discovered at Easter. Given these limits, Thought for the Day always runs the danger of banality, apple-pie hometruths with God slipped surreptitiously in at the end. It's a slot which takes few risks; it is weighted towards clerics, Protestants and the late middle-aged middle class. It is tailored by non-believing producers for a largely non-believing audience. Everyone knows what's wrong. Few, thankfully, care enough to want to get rid of it, but even fewer seem to know how to revitalise it. The same could be said of British religion. Among the flurry of conflicting comments made by the BBC, they are promising new, less "churchy" voices. Good luck to them.



Letters to the Editor

The price of injustice

YOUR report of the difficulties of the Birmingham Six in achieving adequate compensation and, in particular, the comments of Gerry Hicks MP, highlights how much the pendulum has swung away from the levels of concern that saw the setting up of the Royal Commission on Justice (Birmingham Six suffered irreparable trauma April 23). There has long been a whispering campaign from the right suggesting that the Irish victims of miscarriages of justice were lucky to be cleared on technicalities. The fact that they are suffering from severe trauma is in itself convincing evidence of their innocence. It is increasingly recognised that persons wrongly locked up for hideous crimes can incur serious psychological damage, as they are not given the opportunity of being constantly targeted by a frequently hostile system. In acting for Stefan Kiszko, I was referred to prison medical records describing him as having "delusions of innocence". To endure the wrongful conviction, to battle for years to be cleared and then face a fight for compensation in a system that places a higher value on a pop star's reputation than it does in its citizens' freedom, prolongs the ordeal for the victim and diminishes us all. C J Malone, Solicitor, 13 Halifax Road, Todmorden, Lancs OL14 8AG.

TERRY Hicks's comment is defamatory. Those of Dame Jill Knight and John Carlisle are almost certainly defamatory. None of them is covered by Parliamentary privilege. Their comments make it necessary to remind them and others of the basic facts: The men were arrested in November 1974 and treated with extreme violence while in police custody and when in prison. They were treated as guilty from the outset. They were convicted on defective scientific evidence and police forgeries; Compensation is supposed to be assessed in line with damages which would be awarded in a court of law. My client (Gerry Hunter) has still not received a final assessment from the Home Office Assessor. I understand that the other five have. Figures which have been mentioned do not even come up to the amount of wages and pension which Gerry Hunter would have had. As the Home Office itself admits, no basis of calculation of the awards exists and certainly none has been published. Which six Conservative MPs will volunteer to spend the 18 1/2 years in prison so that they may come out with some understanding of what some are so ready to talk about? Ivan Geffen, Solicitor, Malvern House, 62 Bradford Street, Walsall WS1 3QD.

SURELY the people of Birmingham would rather that those guilty of heinous murders should be punished. These six men, and their families, have had their lives ruined by British justice. How then can MPs say that they have been treated "with great fairness" or that they "didn't deserve a penny in the first place"? We can never compensate for the damage that we have inflicted on these men. Hugh Callaghan says he feels no bitterness after 16 years behind bars. It would be better if our MPs demonstrated some of his virtues. Sharon Eastwood, 101 Station Road, Gamlingay, Sandy, Beds SG19 3EB.

IN ALL the years that the Irish have campaigned for their release of "The Six", not one Irish representative has expressed sorrow for the dead. Having had a friend murdered by the IRA (not in the Birmingham bombing) I have found this selective conscience on the part of the Irish (yes, and their British liberal supporters) totally unacceptable. Anthony David Jones, Latchford Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire.

THE scandalous comments by various Tory MPs would suggest that they still regard the six men as somehow responsible for the bombings and for this reason deserving of compensation. If this is not the case, then would they kindly explain why it is unthinkable to use taxpayers' money for payments to persons locked away for 16 years for no reason whatsoever, but perfectly acceptable for the British government constantly to pour the same money down the drain in an orgy of mismanaged privatisation? Declan Swanton, Reimsburgstr 57, 70178 Stuttgart, Germany.

Let me take you by the hand and lead you off the streets of London

LONDON Regional Passengers Committee has long urged London Transport to license buskers (Leader, April 24). With decent safeguards, talented and disciplined buskers bring the colour of street theatre to and help harmonise an often bleak and inadequately staffed system. We have even offered to represent passengers on the audition panel. (Prof) Eric Midwinter, Chair, LRPC, 14-18 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7FR.

MANY of the original doowoppers developed their techniques and repertoires through practice in the access tunnels of New York subway stations because of the favourable acoustics. Contrary to your assertions, I believe we should be encouraging our young people to revive this tradition and perform the works of The Four Seasons and other doowoppers in the Underground. Iain Noble, 32 Crutfield Road, London NW5 1EN.

VERY sorry to hear of the unappreciative attitude of Londoners to buskers on the Tube. They should try the Isle of Wight where we have some agreed private sites lined up for the season in Shanklin, Ventnor and Newport. We are looking for all sorts of enter-

tainers, not just musicians, so come on down to the Garden. An ass will bring details. Louis Lawrence, Hon. Marketing Officer, IoW Council for the Arts, 26 Gills Cliff Road, Ventnor, IoW PO38 1LH.

YOUR leader will find a large measure of agreement in Bournemouth. For some years now the pedestrian areas of this town and the several arcades have been greatly enriched by the performances of a variety of musicians ranging from eclectic to conservative standard, and of ethnic or classical interest. The performers cause no obstruction and are clearly much appreciated by the modest crowds they attract. What might put the matter in perspective is the recent group put out two hats for donations. If you approved of the performance you put something in the left hat and if you didn't you could put something in the other. James F Sullivan, 4 Uxbridge Road, Bournemouth BH8 8SS.

TUBE buskers act as a deterrent to crime: without buskers, empty corridors invite and encourage muggings. They should be encouraged. James Hazen, 9 Thorogate Road, London W9 2DN.

On racists and low IQs

THE claim by Christopher Brand, author of The g Factor: General Intelligence and its Implications (Publisher drops book by "proud racist", April 18), that he is a racist only in the "scientific sense" is a contradiction in terms if science's task is to establish reality. He says his views are "pretty mainstream" for people in psychometric psychology, which merely shows that some scientists succumb easily to ideology. What is deeply disturbing is that he speaks from an authoritative position within a university to degrade black people and women. Would there be such "findings" if blacks and women were not so seriously under-represented in the academic world? The reappearance of such discredited, inflammatory material as written by Mr Brand stems from the attempt to convert education from a service meeting society's needs into a profit-driven enterprise. The resulting corruption infects both thought

and practice in educational institutions. Gerald Thorpe, Patrick Brady, Council for Academic Freedom and Academic Standards, 7 Benn Street, London E9 8SU.

A Country Diary

HIGHLANDS: Many thanks to those readers who wrote to or telephoned me about the icehouses they know of in the Highlands. These contacts have added several more icehouses to the ever-growing list that now numbers around 45 although I estimate that the final list will be twice that number. One reader remembered two icehouses at Culkein near Lochinver in Sutherland on the east coast and recalls the ice being carried by horse and cart from Lochinver where presumably it had been brought in by boat. The icehouses were used to store salmon that were fished from the bay in summer although the practice appears to have stopped during the war and started again in the fifties when one of the icehouses was used as a cold store although ice does not appear to have been used then. Another source of information may well be Ordnance Survey maps as I have been informed that while icehouses are not normally shown on the 1:50 000, they

will be on the 1:25 000 but that still means a very large number of maps to look at. As regards the planned inventory I took out the first recording forms two weeks ago — an excuse to drive up the east coast to Little Ferry near Colpsie. Fortunately this striking structure is a listed building so there was at least some information from the archaeological department. This was perhaps just as well as I did not know how to describe the unusual shape of the structure which I am assured is a cusped foreland so it looks as if I will have to get used to a new terminology. On the way back I looked briefly at the large icehouse on the side of the road at Benhar Bridge that would no doubt have been used by the local salmon fishing station. As for the icehouse reported at the Melkie Ferry near Dornoch I simply could not find it so it may have been demolished unless it was tucked away out of sight. RAY COLLIER

Bad behaviour

YOU describe the NAS/UWT threatened teachers' strike over a disruptive pupil as one which "would have been the first teachers' strike over discipline for 10 years" ("Violent" boy to get special deal, April 24). This is not the case. In summer 1992, the NUT staff members of the Hammersmith School (since renamed Phoenix High School in the Windward/Sellafield tradition), went on strike over refusing to teach three 12-year-old boys accused of arson. Although the initial outcome was similar to the solution adopted in Claisdale, ie with the headmaster personally supervising the children, the boys were transferred elsewhere.

Although one has to be sympathetic to the problems of pupils such as Richard Widding and his parents, we must not forget the parents of all the other pupils, whose education is often made impossible by the presence in the classroom of even one seriously disruptive child. The Government has to address where and how to educate such children, now that so many special schools have been closed, rather than accept Ofsted's negative assessment of many inner-city schools. As head of business studies at Hammersmith School, I was suspended on full salary, at the taxpayers' expense, for six months, after being assaulted by two pupils, under a spurious allegation. We are risking causing serious damage to our inner-city schools for the sake of short-term political gain. Anda MacBride, Ardore Road, London SW2.



Diana has found her vocation

LIKE the Princess of Wales, feel deeply for the needy and suffering (The Queen of Hearts and sortas, April 20) and, like her, come from a privileged background (although not as privileged as hers). And so I decided, at the age of 40, to become a nurse. I did just emerge from three years' training. I have worked on wards, in operating theatres, with AIDS patients and sick children, and struggled through night duties and shift work, at the same time as being a wife and mother of two children — and all for £7,000 a year. If the Princess of Wales truly wishes to be a Queen of Hearts, why not enrol as a student nurse, and meet all the real needs of hearts out there in hospitals? She could then be useful in operating theatres instead of getting in the way. Maggie Andrews RGN, Bishops Stortford.

THE publication of her visit might encourage the Government to provide adequately for the NHS. Not so long ago the then minister was considering closing Harefield. (Dr) Pamela Aylett, 41 Nepean Street, London SW16 5DW.

In defence

IN reply to your Saturday letters critical of Israel: firstly, its presence in south Lebanon is not a civil occupation, but a limited military presence designed to minimise incursions into, and strikes against, northern Israel. No one would be happier than the Israelis if they could leave. Not only Israeli civilians, but many Israeli soldiers have been killed in this long-running conflict. As for the charge that Jewish and Christian leaders have not condemned Lebanese civilian deaths, no one from either community has expressed other than horror. Israelis have held protests against the horrific shelling of the UN camp. Yet Muslim terrorists who set out to massacre Jews in Islam's name are regarded as martyrs. Fann Marshall, London NW3.

TO WATCH surgical operations is educational and does give a greater understanding of the fears and anxiety small children and their parents must undergo when surgical skill is balanced against known mortality. Certainly, it is a more useful occupation than shooting birds, hunting foxes and deer, or playing about on polo ponies. It takes strong nerves to watch an operation — many

Handwritten Arabic text: صكنا من الامال

Diary
Joanna Coles

I AM enamoured to learn that, fresh from denying the mysterious rumours that he is to take over as head of Radio 4, my friend Melvyn Bragg is set for yet more media exposure. Discussions are underway at BBC2 to produce a TV version of Start the Week. (Monday night is the most likely slot, especially as the already and strangely superficial Brian Taveira is unlikely to be re-commissioned.) Of course, the only complaints when TV pick-pockets the Moral Maze were from viewers alarmed by what the presenters actually looked like. As one critic observed, on the radio they have the craggy gravitas of Andrew Smith; on TV they look like characters from Norman Wisdom films. Hardly a criticism one could level at the tightly gelled Mr Bragg.

I AM thrilled to hear that Graham Sharpe, senior bookmaker for William Hill, has entered into the spirit of Britain's latest literary award, the Orange Prize — which restricts its entries not only to women only. So determined is he to stick to the women-only rule, Sharpe has delegated the technical task of compiling the odds to his secretary, who has been commanded to read all the shortlisted titles by the weekend. "I don't read many women authors normally," says Sharpe, looking up briefly from her typewriter. "But for the sort of books you take on holiday and I can't stand that AS Byatt." What does she like then? "Well, I read one book with greyhounds on the front recently which was quite good." "Not yet, but I can tell by page three if they're crap." Such precision does William Hill proud. I await her odds with much anticipation. Truly.

MEANWHILE I am much encouraged by the enthusiasm with which Ian Hargreaves has been swinging his axe at the New Statesman. Not since Geddes has it seen so much action: off went the leads of the deputy and assistant editors and the political columnist earlier this week. And further chops are expected. It was Hargreaves, of course, once a frightfully busy executive at BBC News and Current Affairs, who made the quite brilliant decision to replace Sir Robin Day at Question Time with the effervescent Peter Sissons. His career can only continue to flourish.

ELSEWHERE I am pleased to announce my globetrotting friend Terry Major-Ball is back on British soil at last. He arrived home yesterday morning after a 24-hour flight from the Melbourne Flower Show, during which, I am disappointed to learn, he flew economy class. "It was a little hard on my back but the plane was full and I couldn't expect them to turf someone off," he tells me uncomplainingly. "On the plane I went into the cockpit twice. When you're in those big planes the runway doesn't half come at you at a big lick. I had a lady pilot some of the way. It was very interesting to see a lady pilot a plane. (I'm not saying ladies aren't equal — my mother was equal before her time.) I think I'm correct in saying the lady pilot was a third officer; I understand she's getting her own plane, possibly twin engine." And on that note we must leave him to recover from his jet lag. Tomorrow Terry reveals his exclusive to the Diary his exhausting schedule among the chrysothemisms.

TODAY'S contender for the Plain English Award comes from a report by the National Police Training Centre. "Quality assurance may be defined as all the planned and systematic activities implemented within the quality system and demonstrated as needed, to provide adequate confidence that an entity will fulfil requirements for quality. Thus in order for quality to be assured it is necessary for quality to be defined. Quality may be defined as follows: totality of characteristics of an entity that bear on its ability to satisfy stated and implied needs." I trust that's sufficiently clear.



No script for a play outside Peoria

Commentary Hugo Young

in Washington

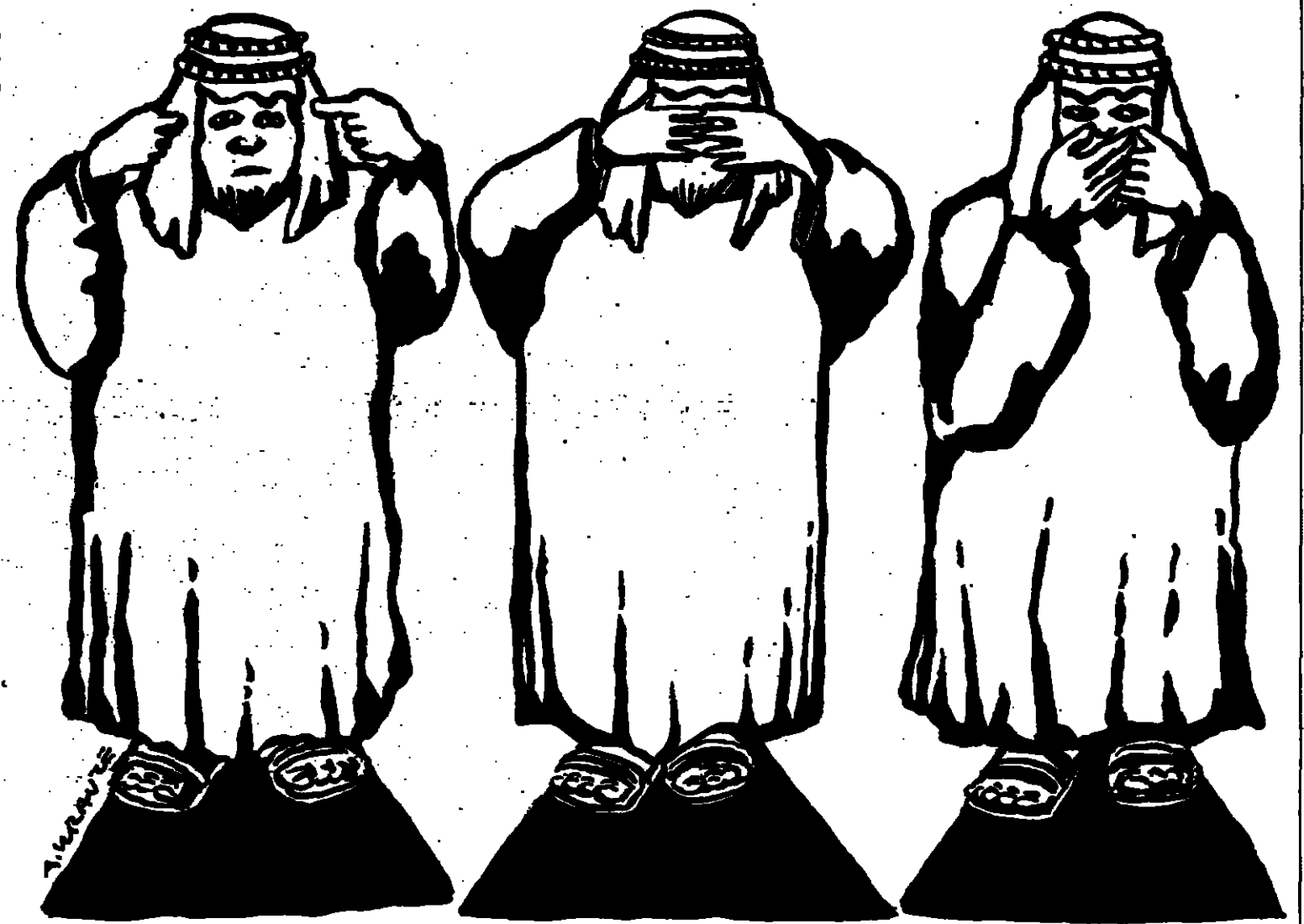
AMERICA bestrides the world, but the colossus is bewildered. She doesn't know where to fix her gaze. Her responsibility has never been more solitary, but her attitude never more uncertain. In the Middle East, and Asia, and Europe, other outside powers count for little, as we see every day. But nor, often, does the US. As a result, Christopher, kept insistently in an sm-drummer this week, on his 17th visit to Syria since becoming Secretary of State. In Washington over the years, I've heard much sibilant isolationism and many brands of loud imperialism. But I've never, until now, been regaled by such incoherence on one side, and such indifference on the other.

President Clinton is a little more engaged than he was. In 1992 he declared for a domestic presidency but soon learned it wasn't available, and he has important achievements to his credit, notably in the area of trade. He also, finally, got committed in Bosnia. Whether the Nato military presence, as pledged, will end exactly on time this year is not a closed question. To some surprise, Clinton said the other day that an extension would remain under review, though Congress would doubtless fight it. Washington is more bullish than London about the chance of some kind of stability establishing itself. As long as nobody gets killed — an eventuality which the US forces are under strict instructions to avoid — the great American public won't notice what's happening, which is the way Clinton needs it to be.

What happens after the troops depart, however, is quite unclear. Avoiding the 90-man ambush that could lose the election is about as far as the White House thinks ahead. An economic commitment will remain, and rapid reaction forces could stay camped in Croatia and Hungary. But what's missing is a concept. The critique of the Clinton foreign policy remains unchanged. Framework and linkage, the architecture of a world view, are absent. Robert Zoellick, a senior man in the Bush State Department and one of the few conceptualisers round Bob Dole, calls Clinton "strategically passive and tactically reactive", and the charge is hard to rebut. It is wishy washy in Europe, where Bosnia drowns out other strategic thinking. Washington wants Nato expansion and EU enlargement, and is deeply mystified by what most people regard as the crazy whoring after a single currency. But diplomacy is mainly confined to firefighting. Few people are thinking for the decade. At this turning-point of history, when the teaching role of the presidency could come into its own, this president, a gifted communicator, has nothing to say.

The alternative, however, seems to offer even less. With the Republicans, indifference reaches the lower depths. Talk to the new conservatives in the Congress or the think-

tanks, and you hear not organised isolationism so much as sheer anomia. These supposedly razor-sharp new-wave politicians, rigorous in deconstructing post-war conventional wisdom about welfare and economics, simply change the subject when you suggest that the US, willy nilly, must have a foreign policy. It is as if their assault on "government" must encompass a denial that any such policy is needed to express the US interest.



A powerless people

Edward Said argues that the Arabs' problem is not solely the wickedness of a perceived oppressor, but a deep-seated and paralysing internal malaise

THE question is not only that Israel has lived outside the norms of international behaviour in war or in peace since it was established, but that today the Arabs are totally powerless. Whereas Israel can roll its tanks across borders, its air force can bomb civilians at will, its propagandists can fill the western media with their lies about self-defence and the war against terrorism, the Arabs for their part can only bleat out little squeaks of anger.

process means Israeli occupation with Palestinian partners. The Palestine Authority now has 12,000 Palestinian policemen and a few hundred Israeli policemen can be as clever as an Israeli at catching Palestinian "terrorists" and "fundamentalists". The only trouble is that the military occupation continues, the Territories are closed, Area A is only 1 per cent of the West Bank, there is 70 per cent unemployment, Palestinian lands are expropriated every day, houses are demolished, people go hungry and they are tortured, and Arafat goes to meet Peres while the Israeli army is bombing Lebanon and killing civilians. The two great peace-makers and Nobel-prize winners emerge from their meetings with smiles on their faces. The peace process moves forward, and allows Peres to invade Lebanon, thus placing his desire to be re-elected above the lives of half a million Lebanese refugees and several hundred fatalities.

As a society we are left with slogans and, as Naipaul's character says, seven words. And these continue to camouflage the reality from us, which is our own self-inflicted powerlessness. We must all of us ask why it is that for the past five decades we have watched Israel violate our sovereignty, massacre our civilians, humiliate our soldiers and generals, colonise our land, even as we make speeches and vow vengeance. Empty words in the air.

Our last gamble — that Israel wants peace and is willing to be generous — has proved to be extremely flawed. Israel, like the US, wants to preserve its interests intact. No matter how many times Abu Ammar and Abu

The novel is dead? Long live the novel



Natasha Walter

THE death of the novel is here again. It's a standing joke among newspaper literary editors trying to find a story. Shall we commission the "books are out" piece, or shall we commission the one that proves "books are back"? Ever since the novel was born, critics have been proclaiming its death: John Middleton Murry insisted on its demise just at the time that Froude, Joyce and Woolf were going. This time, George Steiner has fired an opening salvo: "What we know as literature has had a very, very short run," he told a meeting of the Publishers' Association recently (in a speech reprinted in the May issue of Prospect), and went on to assure them that the novel was dead.

advertising, computer screens and cinema. For him, the advent of the computer is a more thorough revolution than that of the printing press. He tells us eagerly that one day each of us will have a portable computer, "on-line to the libraries of the world", and then we will never look at books in the same way again. But what would we read on our computer, dear George, but books? The Internet, with its half-digested facts and rambling corridors of nonsense, amuses nobody who isn't using it free. And when the computer got too heavy on our arms as we lay on the beach, when we found we had forgotten to charge up its batteries as we got on the train, when the bill came in from the server, the telephone company and the computer repair shop, wouldn't someone squawk with anger their cute new invention, on a level set of bound-up print-outs that never needed a new plug? Just as the fax and electronic mail have actually revitalised the art of letter-writing, and just as the white-hot technological revolution that started so painfully at Wapping has only led to yet more inky newspapers being placed in the box hampers of yet more commuters, why are we driving a movement not away from literacy, but towards text, text, and more text.

So let's not get too scared about the idea of a drop in the statistics are very alarming, and need to be taken seriously," confides the managing director of one large publishing house. Certainly, the demise of the Net Book Agreement has led to cheaper books — but if people do not keep up their spending overall, then the profits of the publishers, and the number of books published, will begin to fall steeply.

So will the novel take its place, finally, among the epics and verse tragedies, the dinosaur genres of the past? Well, look around you next time you're on a train, see all the dozens of people hunched over their creased Penguin and Virago classics. The common reader is still out there. Isn't it more likely that the novel is just sick, and will surprise us by twitching a leg just as we send in the undertakers?

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Dzhokhar Dudayev

Chechen for ever

HIS index finger pointing skywards, the small man with the pencil moustache stared at you with black eyes burning with Chechen passion: "My life depends on Allah. It does not depend on the PSK (the former KGB) nor does it depend on your Russian government."

In a remote field in southern Chechnya, Allah called in the chips. That Dzhokhar Dudayev should perish at the age of 52, not at the hands of the KGB, nor of Russia's ground forces, but from a rocket fired from a Russian aeroplane, was perhaps an end fitting an exemplary former Soviet bomber pilot.

Bizarre though it may seem, the Chechen separatist leader retained to the end the characteristics and manner of a Soviet military man — small, wiry, immaculately turned out, and never on time. His interviews were lectures. His quotes were rants, littered with unusable conspiracy theories. He used his many contacts with Western and Russian journalists to deliver purple threats of impending doom.

Dudayev was a man of bluff. He threatened to bring the civil war into Russian

houses and prophesied the conflict, which he claimed was part of a Russian plan to exterminate his people, would last for 50 years. On one occasion he put two old SS-20 rockets on two modern SS-20 mobile missile launchers to fool the Russians, with the largest army in Europe, into thinking that he had the potential of using long-range missiles against Moscow.

Dudayev, the youngest of seven children, was born the same year that 200,000 Chechen men, women and children died in Stalin's mass deportation of the half a million strong mountain nation to Kazakhstan. Most died of hunger and cold in unheated cattle trucks in the bitter winter of 1944. His father and an elder brother died, but Dudayev survived only to spend the next 13 years in exile in Kazakhstan.

The family returned to Chechnya in 1957 and in 1962 Dudayev entered the Tambov aviation school. On graduation he went to Yuri Gagarin Air Force Academy, the Soviet Union's highest pilot academy. A master sports wrestler and bomber pilot, he took part in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and rose to become commander of a division of heavy

bombers, based in Tartu, Estonia.

This was a formidable role, but his relations with his Russian commanders weren't always easy. His career nearly ended when he was caught changing an officer who had insulted him, waving a drawn sabre.

His military career came to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union. He was invited to join the executive committee of the United Congress of Chechen People (OKCHEN), a political organisation in opposition to Moscow's placement, Dokui Zavgayev, leader of the Chechen-Ichkeria Supreme Soviet and first secretary of the regional Communist Party.

Today's Russian army generals often maintain that "if the USSR had survived, Dudayev would still be a nice air force general." They are probably right. The Soviet military tried hard to keep the commander who had already been decorated with the orders of the Red Banner and the Red Star by offering him promotion. But Dudayev's answer was to say: "The highest honour is to be a simple Chechen."

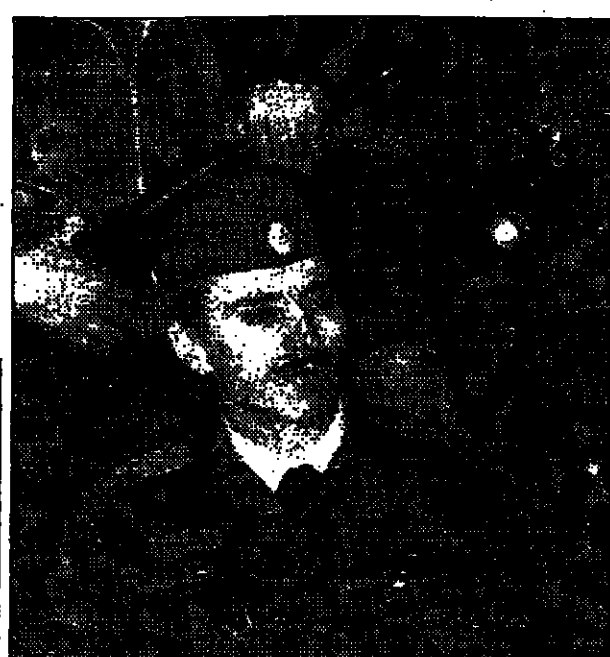
He returned home with a Russian wife, Alevtina, an artist, but with the heart of a

Chechen nationalist. Dudayev was elected chairman of the United Congress and in October 1991 staged a relatively bloodless coup d'état — only one deputy was killed — ousting Zavgayev and the remains of the Communist Party in Chechnya, who had supported the failed coup against Gorbachev in Moscow.

Initially, Boris Yeltsin supported Dudayev, and looked the other way when Dudayev declared himself the winner of a falsified Chechen presidential election in October 1991, and went on to declare independence from Moscow for the Autonomous Republic of Chechnya.

In 1992 Dudayev received both arms and money from Yeltsin's first radical democratic government and the oil continued to flow up until 1994.

However, Moscow had lost interest, although Dudayev's power base increased. Only by the summer of 1994 did tension increase sufficiently, as a result of hijackings in the region for the Russian president to accuse Chechnya of harbouring terrorists. When Moscow backed a series of ill-planned coup attempts with Russian tanks hired by the KGB, they thought Dudayev would be ousted in a matter of



Prophet of conflict... Chechen leader, Dudayev

days. After large numbers of Russian troops were held captive, Russian forces went in on December 11, 1994.

From refuges to brilliant Soviet General, to the most wanted man in Russia, Dudayev and his men staged the most brilliant guerrilla defence of the Chechen capital, Grozny, and the presidential "palace" that Russia had ever seen. Young, frightened conscript soldiers were cannon fodder to the vastly more experienced Chechen commando fighters. But Dudayev was by the same token a lousy politician. On his shoulders partly rests responsibility for the loss of over 40,000 civilian lives. The fight against the Russian military machine was always going to be an

unequal one, and the Russians have twice been on the verge of destroying Dudayev's forces, surrounding and pounding one village at a time.

He was once asked what he would like to be remembered for. He replied: "I would like very much to leave behind me, the good tracks of human love and humanity. But in this perverse world, such things are only achieved with great difficulty." Good tracks of human love and humanity, or the dirt tracks of devastation and war?

David Hearst

Dzhokhar Dudayev, separatist leader, born April 15, 1944; died April 21, 1996

Jack Kitching

Pioneer in deep water

PROFESSOR JA Kitching, who has died aged 67, was a pioneer of sub-littoral marine ecology and founder of the marine research centre at Lough Ine in south-west Ireland.

There, with the help of family, friends and students, on land near the lough, bought shortly after the second world war, Jack Kitching established a small laboratory and, over decades, he developed original and meticulous techniques for the study of underwater biology.

The Lough Ine region is described as Lustranian, warmed by the Gulf Stream and looking out on the south-west approaches. It has now been dedicated as a nature reserve of special scientific interest. Covering about five square kilometres, the lough has a narrow entrance five metres wide whose fast and erosive tidal flows nevertheless allow only slow water exchange with the protected and ecologically rich main lough. These conditions first attracted an Irish fisherman, coastal survey in 1916, provide an excellent setting for the study of marine species and their interactions in normal and stressed conditions.

Born into a Quaker family in York, Jack Kitching had an interest in natural history throughout his boyhood, although when he went to Cheltenham College in 1922, he specialised in classics. Once at Trinity, Cambridge, in 1928, he elected to study zoology and on graduating in 1931, became a lecturer in zoology at Birkbeck College, London. There he gained his doctorate in 1933.

In that year he married Evelyn Oliver, who shared his travels and sometimes self-imposed hardships. By this time Kitching's twin-track scientific career had taken off through the publication of highly original papers and he moved successively to Edinburgh and then, in 1937, to Bristol University where there was a strong tradition in experimental zoology.

It was to Bristol he returned after his Princeton fellowship and his subsequent wartime work in Canada, becoming Reader in Zoology in 1948. This was the period during which the Lough Ine base became firmly established.

Kitching's first involvement with underwater ecology began back in the 1930s when, using the difficult hard-hat and heavy boot diving gear of the time, he carried out species and habitat investigations in shallow waters off the west coast of Scotland and then off southwest England. By 1934 he had published several pioneering papers and, demonstrating the parallel interest in cell physiology which he followed for the rest of his life, a series of papers on osmotic and ionic mechanisms important in the cellular regulation in protozoa — complex single celled organisms.

This work on cell regulation was carried out at a time when there was little recognition of the importance or the rapid adaptability of the protozoan communities in marine and other biological cycles. Then in 1938, on a Rockefeller Fellowship with Daniel Pease at Princeton, Jack Kitching was introduced to the experimental use of high hydrostatic

pressures in the study of cells. This led to his discovery of the wide variation of pressure sensitivity in cellular components and tissues, among which some protein assemblies were found to break down very rapidly.

Kitching introduced high pressure in the investigation of cell physiology. The importance of such studies, now widely used, lies in their ability to determine the stability and binding properties of proteins and hence the strength and bonding mechanisms of protein assemblies.

During the war Kitching's marine experience was brought to bear on survival research for the Royal Air Force. This work, on the effects of cold, of oxygen shortage, of shock and of exposure to a narrow entrance five metres wide whose fast and erosive tidal flows nevertheless allow only slow water exchange with the protected and ecologically rich main lough. These conditions first attracted an Irish fisherman, coastal survey in 1916, provide an excellent setting for the study of marine species and their interactions in normal and stressed conditions.

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Old fashioned scientist... marine ecologist, Kitching

biology. He was among the first to investigate the effects of ionising radiation on protozoa, demonstrating in the 1950s that, among other structures, cellular components essential for replication were also highly sensitive to damage by radiation.

Kitching was a very reserved, shy man, an old-fashioned scientist fortunate to live in an age when the pursuit of esoteric interests was not seen as self-indulgence or arrogance. Sadly, his precision of thought and his personality are on public record only in his many scientific papers.

In 1960 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society and, three years later, took the chair of biology at the new University of East Anglia where he pursued his research into the ultrastructure of protozoa and his marine ecology at Lough Ine, until long after his retirement in 1974.

Jack Kitching, although very focused, was never a workaholic. Jack's was devoted to his gardens — a life-long interest which he shared with his wife, Evelyn.

Anthony Tucker

John Alwyn Kitching, zoologist, born October 24, 1908; died April 1, 1996

P L Travers

The lasting magic of Mary Poppins

TO SURVIVE the impact of later life, children need regular inoculations of magic and alarm. To survive the impact of their children, wise parents provide these injections by reading aloud. Which is why a multitude of children, parents and grandparents, all over the world, are so grateful to P L Travers, who has died aged 96.

Her myths have enchanted them for 60 years — ever since her most famous creation, Mary Poppins, a unique and unsmiling children's nanny first parachuted into the life of a family she chose, on her coloured umbrella with its talking parrot-head handle.

Mary Poppins has become a classic and like all classics she emerged from an imagination touched by genius, but neither author nor character are easy to trace to their sources.

Pamela Lyndon Travers was born Helen Lyndon Goff into an Irish-Scottish ranching family in Queensland. Her grandfather had been the premier of Queensland and founder of Colonial Sugar Refining. Her beloved father died when she was only seven and at 11 she was sent to a boarding school, equipped she wrote, with the aid of a God who had a son but no wife, and therefore must cook for himself; a love of the night sky glittering with the constellations that frequent her books; and a handbook of "simple tribal programs".

She started work as a journalist in Sydney, but when she tried her hand on the stage, she picked her new name, Pamela Lyndon Travers. She used it when her first poem was published by a newspaper editor called Murdoch (the later had a son called Rupert). Moving to London she wrote for the New English

Weekly, and sent a poem to the Irish Statesman for which she was paid £5. This led to a friendship with its editor, the poet George Russell, known as AE, who became as close to her as the father she had lost.

Early in the 1930s Mary Poppins flew into her head, and no sooner were the first two or three stories on paper than they were eagerly seized by the publisher Peter Davies. *Mary Poppins* made her debut in 1934, followed by *Mary Poppins Comes Back* (1935) and *Mary Poppins Opens The Door* (1936). Their accompanying drawings were by Mary Shepard, whose father had illustrated *Winnie The Pooh*. The three books were immediate best-sellers.

When war broke out in 1939, Pamela worked for a time in the Ministry of Information. She never married, but adopted a son.

She was backed by an energetic new publisher, William Collins, who lent her an attic in his office to encourage her to start writing again. He helped her reap the rewards of a quest for her heroine, and Mary Poppins to parts of the planet her umbrella could not reach. Disney had wanted to buy the film rights as far back as the 1930s, but it was not until the 1960s that Pamela agreed to a deal ("I don't want it to be spoilt") when the then Arnold Goodman negotiated a contract that she could not refuse. Although Pamela relished the phenomenal success of the film and was delighted by Julie Andrews as her heroine, she could not abide the spoonfuls of sugar with which her work had been coated: astringent was an essential ingredient of her character.

Much of her life was devoted to a quest for the meaning of existence. She searched in America among the Navajo Indians, the world of Zen in Japan, in Jung's footsteps in Switzerland, and on her



P L Travers... she hated the sugar-coated Disney version of Mary Poppins

PHOTOGRAPH: JANE BROWN

knees as a Christian. Her hunt produced a number of books — *Fox At The Manger* (1952), *Friend Monkey* (1971) and *About The Sleeping Beauty* (1975). After a succession of occasional pieces on symbolism, psychology and allegory appeared in *Parabola* magazine they were collected in *What The Bee Knows* (1986).

There was never any question that P L Travers possessed a sharp mind and warm heart. From her asides on Leda and the Swan, *Sleeping Beauty's* pricked finger,

and "the erotic thrill" of stealing apples as a child, it is obvious that she was equally alive to her senses. Her care deeply for her son, his wife and their children; she received an honorary doctorate from Chatham College, Pittsburgh, an OBE and a fortune, in royalties (some of which she endowed for an award). Nevertheless in an essay on sadness she hints at a longing, perhaps for love, that was never fulfilled.

All her life she evaded the

persistent question: how did you invent Mary Poppins? If her genesis was spontaneous then it was a question that could not be answered, but in 1988 a mist in her mind partially lifted. One night, after her father died, Pamela's mother left her — aged 10 — alone with her two little sisters, on a night of thunder, lightning and torrential rain. She was intending to drown herself in a creek. Suddenly Pamela was aware that she possessed a gift, a spell strong enough to confound the night-

mare: huddling her sisters under an eiderdown in front of the fire she started to tell them a story about a small house. The spell worked until her bedraggled mother returned. The nightmare was over, but Pamela's gift never left her. Happily it has continued to delight her, and us, ever afterwards.

Adrian Hecce

Pamela Lyndon Travers, writer, born August 9, 1899; died April 23, 1996

Birthdays

Ann Bowtell, permanent secretary, Dept of Social Security, 58; Eric Bristow, darts champion, 38; John Bryant, deputy editor, the Times, 52; Johann Cruyff, football manager, 48; Digby Fairweather, jazz trumpeter, broadcaster, 50; James Fenton, poet, traveller, 47; Ella Fitzgerald, singer, 79; Sir Francis Graham-Smith, as-

tronomer, 73; Lord Lichfield, photographer, 67; Richard Lindley, broadcaster, 60; Al Pacino, actor, 56; William Roache, actor, 64; David Shepherd, painter, conservationist, 66; Lord (Robert) Sainsbury, biographer, 58; Victoria Southwood, ambassador to Ireland, 57; Bjorn Ulvaeus, Abba guitarist and singer, 51.

Jackdaw



At cock crow

THERE is a story about a merchant who pestered Moses to teach him the language of animals. Moses tried to ward him off but ultimately gave in. Armed with the knowledge, he made a habit of going to his backyard and listening to the birds and animals. One day he heard a cock tell another inmate: "See that donkey, how his left hind leg is shaking? He is dying in three days." The merchant took the donkey to the market next day, sold him and came back happy. As foreseen, the donkey duly died. Another day the same cock pointed to a horse and said:

"See how his legs wobble. He will die in two days." The merchant promptly sold the horse, made a pile and was happy. Came a day when he heard the cock say: "See the master? How his leg shakes! He will die in a few days." The alarmed merchant ran to Moses and asked: "What do I do?" "Go, sell yourself," said Moses.

V N Narayanan ponders on the dangers of knowledge in *Musings, his column in New Delhi's The Hindustan Times*.

Flabbin' funny

BERNARD Manning has been telling Matt Stephenson of *Comedy Review* about his kind of humour. If you are sensitive — and Bernard is famously sensitive to other people's feelings — skip this item.

"Take that whateername, Jo Brand, what a thoroughly horrid comic she is. I mean, come on, she's talking about 'Tampax, shit and piles'. That is not funny." So, are those things best not talked about? Well, who wants to talk about shit and piles and fuckin', puttin'

Maltesers down the toilet? It's not funny.

"I'd never get a joke out of shit, 'cos I'd think about the young man that's sat with the young bird, he doesn't want to know about this sort of bally thing, fartin', shittin' and Tampax... It's just flabbin' unbelievable. They want to think and talk about that, then that's their business. I just don't want to fartin' know about it. Not when I'm having my tea, sat at home watchin' the flabbin' telly. Understand?"

Stephenson ends his piece with a little list of Bernard's own objects of humour. These include: coons, Jane, vibrators, fat coons, Japs, tits, shaggin', Franco ("he was a good bloke"), the Irish, bastard IRA, niggers, wanakin', curry, Azerbaijanis, and lynching.

Pistol pretty

Marion Hammer is the first woman president of America's National Rifle Association. A grandmother, she helped change the law in Florida to permit its citizens to carry concealed weapons. This is part of

an interview she gave to *George magazine*.

MER Because the whole issue of assault weapons is about what the gun looks like. Cosmetics is really the only thing that separates a so-called assault weapon from every other semi-automatic firearm.

JK Cosmetics?

MER Yes. I'm being denied the right to own a semi-automatic firearm simply because someone doesn't like the way it looks. People don't understand the semi-automatic technology, which has been around for over 100 years. It is basically a hunting rifle that has been cosmetically modified. I'll give you an analogy. If you look at all the different automobiles that are out there, the majority of them travel on regular roads. So how do you explain the dumb buggies or off-road vehicles? They're different, but you don't hear anybody saying, "Why does anyone need to have a dumb buggy or an off-road vehicle? What's wrong with your regular run-of-the-mill, traditional automobile?" It's all a matter of personal preference.

Off-road vehicles? Tanks come to mind, combining good road holding and effective personal protection. But it's just a matter of personal preference.

Catch this

Laugh a couple of times as you read the following list of viruses you should be aware of and you are probably a really up-to-the-minute person. Thanks to Gordon Joly who understands them all (including the ones Jackdaw has left out).

OPRAH WINFREY VIRUS: Your 300MB hard drive suddenly shrinks to 50MB, and then slowly expands back to 300MB.

AT&T VIRUS: Every three minutes it tells you what great service you are getting.

MCI VIRUS: Every three minutes it reminds you that you're paying too much for the AT&T virus.

PAUL REVERE VIRUS: This revolutionary virus does not horse around. It warns you of impending hard disk attack — once if by LAN, twice if by C.

POLITICALLY CORRECT VIRUS: Never calls itself a "virus", but instead refers to itself as an "electronic micro organism."

RIGHT TO LIFE VIRUS:

Won't allow you to delete a file, regardless of how old it is. If you attempt to erase a file, it requires you to first see a counsellor about possible alternatives.

MARIO CUOMO VIRUS: It would be a great virus, but it refuses to run.

TED TURNER VIRUS: Colourises your monochrome monitor.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER VIRUS: Terminates and stays resident. I'll be back.

DAN QUAYLE VIRUS: Prevents your system from spawning any child process without joining into a binary network.

DAN QUAYLE VIRUS 52: Their is something wrong wit your computer, ewe jst cant figyout our watti

GOVERNMENT ECONOMIST VIRUS: Nothing works, but all your diagnostic software says everything is fine.

GALLUP VIRUS: Sixty per cent of the PCs infected will lose 38 per cent of their data 14 per cent of the time (plus or minus a 3.5 per cent margin of error).

TEXAS VIRUS: Makes sure that it's bigger than any other file.

ADAM AND EVE VIRUS: Takes a couple of bytes out of your Apple.

FREUDIAN VIRUS: Your computer becomes obsessed with marrying its own motherboard.

ELVIS VIRUS: Your computer gets fat, slow and lazy, then self destructs; only to resurrect as Burger Kings service stations across America.

OLLIE NORTH VIRUS: Causes your printer to become a paper shredder.

KEVORKIAN VIRUS: Helps your computer shut down as an act of mercy.

LAFD VIRUS: It claims its files threatened by the other files on your PC and erases them in "self defence".

Er, we get the idea. Gordon. Silicon Valley, England, should have its own neurons soon. NEW LABOUR VIRUS: Refuses socialists access to all files. TORY VIRUS: thinks it's an operating system but isn't sure. I'm sure Jackdaw readers can do better.

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-734 4666; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Desmond Christy

طكتا من الادل

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Finance Guardian

Trade Secretary vetoes generators' plans to control the electricity supply chain

Littlechild prepares to let Hanson grab power

Simon Beavis and Chris Barrie

STEPHEN Littlechild, the electricity regulator, signalled that he was prepared to let Hanson develop a power company both generating and marketing electricity — only hours after similar plans by the two main generators were crushed by the Government.

The decision by Mr Lang, the Trade and Industry Secretary, to block takeovers of regional electricity companies by National Power and PowerGen wiped nearly £1 billion of share values.

Investors and the industry itself had assumed that he would back a report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and give the bids his blessing.

Shares in the electricity sector slumped at a decision widely regarded as odds with past rulings from the Government on utility takeovers.

Analysts predicted that PowerGen and National Power would look to buy shareholder loyalty by announcing packages worth £2 billion between them. The expected packages would include share buy-backs, and National Power could announce a special dividend of £1 a share within a week to ward off a takeover bid by the US utility Southern.

PowerGen is expected to seek to offload its 26 per cent stake in its planned target, Midlands Electricity.

Prof Littlechild made it clear he was in favour of letting Hanson build up supply and distribution interests through its ownership of the regional electricity company Eastern and in generation by buying stations rated at 6,000 megawatts from National Power and PowerGen.

Hanson's purchase of 4,000 megawatts of plant from National Power has yet to be ratified by the Office of Fair

Trading. But in a statement welcoming Mr Lang's decision, Prof Littlechild said the important next step was for the two generators to complete the sale of five power stations to Hanson.

After the disposal, National Power will have 28 to 29 per cent of the generation market and PowerGen 17 per cent. They argue that by buying their stations, Hanson will control 11 to 14 per cent of the power generation market as well as owning the country's biggest regional electricity company.

One analyst criticised Mr Lang's decision as explicable only on account of political pressure. By the year 2000, he said, Hanson would have an 11 per cent market share and PowerGen 15 per cent. He said: "The dividing line between what is acceptable and what is not is becoming very thin."

In an interview with the Guardian, Prof Littlechild said that Hanson's share of the market would be more like 8 to 10 per cent. He said it was not a question of setting a precise percentage share of the market where vertical integration was acceptable, but of encouraging the emergence of competition.

He stressed that competition was not sufficiently well developed in either generation or supply to be able to cope with the sort of mergers envisaged by the generators.

National Power had bid £2.5 billion to take control of Southern Electric — a bid which immediately lapsed yesterday — while PowerGen had bid £1.9 billion for Midlands Electricity. Mr Lang's decision is expected to see a period of consolidation in the already greatly altered power industry, the regulator said that it would take two to three years to see whether moves to increase competition in generation, including the Hanson deal, had worked.



Switch... Ian Lang defies Monopolies Commission to halt mergers. PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD

Market revamp is put on hold

Patrick Donovan City Editor

PLANS to transform the London stock market by introducing "order driven" trading are today expected to be formally delayed because of the lengthy process of negotiating the necessary details with regulators and the Treasury.

The Stock Exchange will effectively put back the clock on the entire process by saying that it does not expect to begin a second consultation process with the entire market until the regulatory matters have been settled.

The delay is expected to be agreed at a meeting of the exchange's board and made public in a formal statement.

The decision to take extra time reflects the exchange's determination to get full market support for the proposed changes. Issues which still have to be resolved include the tax implications of changing trading methods.

The exchange is determined to maintain the support of big market makers who earlier this year forced the resignation of the then chief executive, Michael Lawrence, who lost the confidence of the City by failing to liaise with firms over his proposed radical changes.

The exchange is still trying to sign up a suitable candidate for the pivotal chief executive position.

It has previously said that it intends to transform the "quote driven" market by offering the option of "order driven" dealing for the top FTSE 100 stocks, although there is to be the option of "block trading" over the telephone for much larger deals.

The move represents the biggest shake-up to the London market since the 1987 "Big Bang". The plans will see the introduction of order-driven trading, which electronically matches buy and sell orders. The system is widely used by rival exchanges overseas.

The London Exchange now uses a "quote driven system" in which market makers are always flagging up prices at which they are prepared to buy or sell shares.

Notebook

Electric shock for generators



Edited by Mark Milner

THE City and the electricity supply industry were taken aback yesterday, against might be a better term, by a sudden outbreak of common sense in Victoria Street. Contrary to all expectations, Trade and Industry Secretary Ian Lang decided not to accept the recommendations of the Monopolies Commission and instead opted to block the proposed acquisitions of two regional electricity companies by the two big generators, PowerGen and National Power.

It is hard to fault Mr Lang's logic. The MMC had concluded that the proposed acquisitions might operate against the public interest, but were not certain to do so. Mr Lang, for his part, has chosen to give the benefit of the doubt to the consumer rather than the generators and their shareholders.

It would be comforting to believe that Mr Lang was persuaded by the industry regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild, and by MMC dissenter Patricia Hodgson that the consumer would best be served by encouraging competition in the electricity industry, rather than allowing the vertical integration proposed by National Power and PowerGen. Indeed, it was originally the Government's own idea that keeping generators and suppliers separate was in the consumers' best interest.

Comforting, but unlikely. The decisive voices in the debate are likely to have been John Redwood and former Chancellor Norman Lamont, who this week described the MMC recommendation as "wholly wrong-headed". Mr Lang, who can count the Government's majority with the same ease as anyone else, looks to have ducked a political problem rather than embraced the public interest. Whatever the thinking, however, the decision is the right one.

paper group, Fairfax, and decided to sell out. Mr Black explains his change of heart on price by saying it was impossible to value the Telegraph when it was embroiled in a ferocious price war. Well, yes, but Mr Black is a media mogul of some stature on the world stage, well used to running a slide rule over businesses which are involved in some pricing spat or other.

More to the point, Mr Black still has sizeable global ambitions to fulfil and with no chance of raising money in the London market after the damaging split with institutional investors two years ago, the public quotation is simply a costly nuisance.

He has to look elsewhere for money. By substituting the company in his Hollinger group he can get his hands on the Telegraph's cash flow and can start to look for new finance, with an enlarged group, from the US market.

There will have been plenty of occasions during the Telegraph's four-year foray onto the London stock market when minority shareholders will have regretted backing a business so dominated by a willful entrepreneur. Yesterday, however, he finally gets the benefit from Mr Black's single-mindedness.

The fans can pay

FUNNY game, football. Funny business, too. Just when you think the money is coming rolling in, some player you never heard of becomes a transfer system into touch.

As Preston North End and Tottenham Hotspur, clubs from the English Insurance League and FA Carling Premiership, yesterday made clear the transfer system has implications for clubs right through the professional game.

Spurs has slashed the balance sheet value of its playing staff by a third in the light of the ruling allowing out-of-contract players to move without a transfer fee. Preston was less specific but said it was studying the rulings according ramifications.

It will not be alone. While Manchester United's balance sheet, for example, does not include the value of its playing staff, not all follow this practice. Mr Bosman is likely to become as well known to club auditors as to managers.

Despite the asset value hit, Bosman would appear to be better for football's aristocrats than for those in the lower divisions. Many of the latter rely on selling players to the former for substantial sums. However, as Tottenham's Alan Sugar warned, even the big clubs will kick if the transfer fees they save are spent on players' wages.

Not that Mr Sugar was too downbeat about football's business prospects. After all, he is asking shareholders to back a £10.9 million cash call. It remains to be seen, however, just how many clubs can offer returns not pegged to promotion, relegation or qualifying for European competition. Football remains an investment for the fans.

Black renews Telegraph bid

Lisa Buckingham

CANADIAN media tycoon, Conrad Black, yesterday launched a bid to take full control of the Telegraph newspaper group less than a year after a similar attempt was scuppered by too low an offer price.

The latest move puts a price of 560p on each of the Telegraph's shares, valuing the entire company, whose flagship title is Britain's biggest selling national broadsheet, at £783 million.

Directors of the Telegraph and many of its 1,900 staff will share a windfall worth up to £26 million on their stake in the national newspaper stable. But Dan Colson, deputy chairman of Mr Black's Hollinger group, which is making the bid, said it would be "business as usual". The group was still hoping to increase the price of the Daily Telegraph by 5p to 48p when competition allowed.

The offer proposed by Mr Black, which is being recommended by the Telegraph's independent directors, is about £1 a share more than he said he was prepared to pay this time last year for the 56 per cent of the Telegraph he does not already own.

If the bid succeeds, and City analysts yesterday described

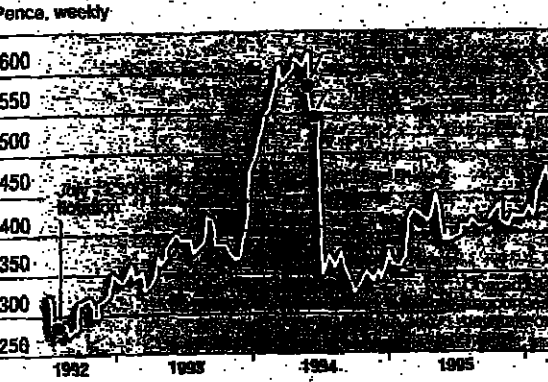
the price as "very fair", it will end a chequered four-year period for the Telegraph as a publicly quoted company.

The City was always sceptical about Mr Black's decision to retain a majority shareholding in the company after flotation. But in spring 1994 when Telegraph group shares were riding high on the back of strong profits, Mr Black sold another 12.5 per cent of his shares to institutional investors for £73 million but within a matter of weeks the price crashed as the Telegraph slashed its cover price to lock horns with The Times.

Although Mr Black was cleared of any impropriety by a Stock Exchange inquiry, the Telegraph's blue-blooded stock broker, Cazenove, walked out and shareholders were left buying for the Canadian bid.

Mr Black is thought to want to get his hands on the cashflow of the Telegraph where headline profits are expected to bounce back from £28 million to £58 million this year. The latest offer will be sweetened by plans to pay shareholders a 10p a share dividend and a promise to cut them in on a special bonus if he sells the Telegraph's 25 per cent holding in John Fairfax Holdings, Australia's largest newspaper company.

Telegraph share price



Littlewoods set to restrain family

Patrick Donovan City Editor

FORMER Cable & Wireless director James Ross looks set to take over the top job at Littlewoods, the privately owned retail empire which is controlled by the 32 members of the wealthy Moores clan.

Mr Ross, who was sacked from C&W after a boardroom bust-up, is expected to replace Leonard van Geest who has held the chairman's job for six years and has now "agreed" to step down. Mr Ross's appointment is expected to

when it is put up for the vote at next month's AGM. The move represents the store group's acknowledgment that it needs to shake up its management to improve financial performance, and part of an attempt to kill takeover speculation which last year resulted in a spate of attempts to mount an offer for the company.

It is understood that possible predators had enlisted the support of several disillusioned key family shareholders. However, the revolt was seen off. A spokesman insisted that Mr van Geest's departure is by mutual consent and refused to say whether he would be entitled to a pay-off from his £225,000-a-year job.

The proposed appointment of a "heavyweight" chairman such as Mr Ross is backed up by moves to give the board more authority over the running of the business. Littlewoods is also planning to prevent family directors from raising shareholder issues at board meetings. The move will involve a change in the company's articles of association aimed at effecting a "clear separation between ownership and management issues". The

restriction will apply to the three family non-executive directors — Lady Grandchester, James Stuenkel-Taylor and John Moores.

Mr Ross's appointment will be seen by the City as a sure sign of management shake up. His tenure as chief executive of C&W ended after falling out with chairman Lord Young. They were both sacked. However, Mr Ross has an established track record as an international strategist.

He said: "If elected, I look forward to leading the revitalisation of this long established business that is part of the fabric of Liverpool and Britain".

KPMG tax retreat

ROGER COWE on the advisers spreading alarm about Labour

THE leading accountancy firm KPMG yesterday backed down in the face of Tuesday's fierce attack from shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown on its tax avoidance advice.

But other firms have continued to try and drum up business from taxpayers worried about an impending Labour government.

KPMG said it was cancelling remaining seminars in a national programme which had attracted Mr Brown's ire. The firm said the seminars had been misinterpreted and misreported and it was voluntarily abandoning them.

Mr Brown had attacked the accountancy firm, Britain's second-largest, for misrepresenting Labour's tax plans.

KPMG said yesterday: "Most unfortunately these seminars have been interpreted as political events, which they never were. Further, mis-reporting of these seminars has distorted their content and purpose. The firm has been, and always will be, firmly apolitical."

But another accountancy firm, Bickel Rothenberg, ran a seminar yesterday on how to gain tax advantages for top employees.

Partner Nilesh Shah said the firm responded to clients who were worried about a Labour Chancellor. "People will continue to speculate," he said, suggesting that Mr Brown could reduce the extent of speculation by clarifying Labour's policies.

Airbus jobs to go

KEITH HARPER in Toulouse on 6,000 staff who must pay price for new plane

A COST-CUTTING exercise of up to 20 per cent is being planned by Airbus Industrie among its 30,000 staff to fund new restructuring plans due next month, its chairman Jean Pierson, announced yesterday.

The 6,000 job cuts will involve savings from among the four Airbus partners, including British Aerospace, but are expected to affect mainly the French consortium member, Aerospatiale.

Mr Pierson made it clear that the cuts would come from middle management and white collar workers. British Aerospace, which has 7,000 people building wings for Airbus projects at Chester and Bristol, will escape the worst of any cuts.

Nasty smell as customers are disowned by British Gas

Geoffrey Gibbs

THE trail-blazing move to inject competition into the domestic gas supply market in South-west England was dogged by further controversy yesterday after hundreds of consumers woke to discover that they were no longer British Gas customers.

The company said it had received almost 700 phone calls from worried householders after it sent out "exit letters" thanking them for their custom and giving the date of their final gas bill.

Some customers said they had not realised they had signed up with a new supplier, while others said they had changed their mind about switching. Ofgas, the industry watchdog, said it was advising anxious consumers to call its special South-west helpline. It emphasised that there was no question of customers being without a gas supply as a result of any uncertainty over the identity of their supplier.

The confusion comes only five days before the monopoly on gas supply to 500,000 homes in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset is broken. British Gas said it was doing all it could to help resolve the situation, but the legal procedure under which customers transfer away from the company did not permit it to know the identity of the new supplier.

Enter the Dragon offer

As the handover to Chinese rule in Hong Kong approaches, the Guardian Finance team's comprehensive reports on the prospects for the colony are now available in booklet form for £2.50, including postage and packing. Please write enclosing cheque or postal order, payable to Guardian Newspapers, to Enter the Dragon offer, City Office, the Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1 3ER



Kohl bungles bungalow summit

Four hours of talks at the German Chancellor's modest home failed to convince the unions to back his blueprint for economic revival. Tomorrow, there's the promise of a rough ride in the Bundestag. IAN TRAYNOR in Bonn reports

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl's campaign to revive the flagging German economy, bring down record unemployment and cut public spending to qualify to join the single European currency suffered a grievous blow yesterday after talks he hosted with union leaders and employers collapsed in acrimony.

The talks, aimed at forging a jobs pact in which unions would trade minimal real wage rises for job creation pledges by employers, ended in a war of words.

"The employers want a different country," said Dieter Schulte, head of the trades union federation. They don't want consensus, they want conflict.



Grave news... 'I was a job' was the message of this recent demonstration by threatened DASA workers in Langheim, near Stuttgart (above). The morning after his failed talks, Helmut Kohl struts the world stage, entertaining Polish premier Wladzimir Cimoszewicz (left). The robot parade at Hannover's industrial fair (below), meanwhile, holds out little prospect of a brighter future for Germany's four million unemployed

dominate his remaining 90 months in office and go a long way towards determining whether his Christian Democrats retain power in October 1998 general election.

But the traditional German way of tackling these problems — by consensus — has broken down and Mr Kohl looks in for a bumpy ride.

He is scheduled to unveil his proposals in a parliamentary speech tomorrow. The talk is of "redynamising" the economy, making it fit for the tough competition of the next century and getting the public finances in order to meet the Euro's entry terms.

On the agenda are proposals for a sweeping reform of the country's immensely complex taxation system and, by German standards, swinging cuts in the lavish welfare system — freezing child benefit, cutting sick pay and unemployment benefit, reforming the pensions system and inducing more labour market flexibility by making it easier to sack workers.

According to Theo Waigel's

finance ministry, savings of DM75 billion (£32 billion) are to be found, divided between the federal budget, the 16 states and local authority spending and social insurance spending, although these figures keep being revised upwards.

By contrast, this year's growth projections of economic recession is taboo in government circles. The talk may be of dynamism, but the reality is stagnation.

The key aims are to cut state spending's share of gross domestic product from just over 50 per cent at present to 46 per cent, to cut state debt and the budget deficit to qualify for the Euro by the

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The employers want a different country. They don't want consensus. They want conflict!

Dieter Schulte, head of the trades union federation

Commission vetoes Lonrho metal merger

Julia Wolf in Brussels

THE European Commission yesterday blocked Lonrho and Gencor from merging their platinum operations and warned that Anglo American will run into similar difficulties if it takes control of Lonrho.

Between them the three companies control 90 per cent of the world's platinum reserves.

Exercising its power to veto mergers on competition grounds for only the fifth time, the commission said the deal would have allowed the world's platinum market to be dominated by two big players — Anglo American and the merged Lonrho-Gencor. This could have led to price-fixing or other anti-competitive practices, the competition commissioner, Karel Van Miert, said.

He added that the commission would look unfavourably on any move by Anglo American to increase its share of Lonrho to a controlling stake.

"If ever, and this is a warning, Anglo American should acquire control of Lonrho, we would have the same problem," Mr Van Miert said.

Lonrho chief executive Dieter Bock said he was puzzled that the commission had chosen to block a deal to which European consumers had

very little exposure. He said, "In the light of this decision, the parties will consult with each other... to determine the best long-term strategy."

In South Africa, Gencor's Impala Platinum Holdings, known as Implats, said it would appeal against the commission's decision. Under EU law, the company can appeal to the European Court of Justice, but a ruling will take more than a year.

Alternatively, Gencor and Lonrho could try to revamp the merger to satisfy the EU, although Mr Van Miert said such a move would be difficult given the extent of the commission's objections.

Mr Van Miert indicated that the two companies had been unwilling to consider any substantial changes to the deal. "We never had a chance to discuss remedies. A rendezvous fixed with Gencor's chief executive officer was put off because the shareholders of Lonrho did not want him to see me."

The commission's move was good news for Tiny Rowland, the Lonrho founder who left the company last year and failed to get Lonrho shareholders to reject the platinum deal. Mr Rowland contends the merger undervalued Lonrho's mining assets and could presage greater control by Gencor.

News in brief

Profit dive explains Fiat share price fall

A MYSTERIOUS fall of more than 4 per cent in Fiat's share price on Tuesday in a rising market was explained yesterday when the company announced that pre-tax profits in the first quarter of this year were down to 464 billion lire (£198 million). In the same period last year Fiat rang up some 600 billion lire. The company added that profits had almost halved as a percentage of sales. Company sources said the fall in the share price "has sufficient explanation of a general nature".

The depressing news was announced at yesterday's board meeting of Fiat SpA, chaired for the first time by Cesare Romiti. The company also announced 1995 net profits of 515 billion lire, doubled its dividend to 100 lire and laid claim to being Europe's second-largest carmaker — John Glover in Milan.

Weak demand phases Philips

PHILIPS, Europe's largest electronics maker, said first-quarter net profit before items fell 31 per cent, in line with expectations, as semiconductor sales slipped and weak demand hurt the consumer electronics unit. Net profit fell to 377 million guilders (£148 million) from 544 million in the year-earlier period. The company expects full-year sales growth to be slower than the 4 per cent increase reported for 1995. — Bloomberg

Siemens disappoints market

GERMAN transportation and electronics group Siemens yesterday disappointed stock market followers when it reported first half net income of DM1.08 billion (£470 million). Although that was some 15 per cent up on the same period last time, the figure was at the bottom end of analysts' expectations.

According to Siemens, it was able to offset weaker trends at home with a sharp rise in international business. Sales in Germany were down 5 per cent on the previous year at DM16.9 billion, but overseas they climbed 14 per cent to DM25.4 billion with the sharpest rise in eastern Europe. — Mark Milner

Amersham early in Japan

AMERSHAM INTERNATIONAL is exercising an option to boost its stake in Japanese rival Nikon Med-Physics from 20 to 50 per cent in a move to expand in Japan earlier than planned. The £51 million purchase from Sumitomo Chemical will push Amersham into first place in the £750 million world market for nuclear medicine products.

Power Store unplugging

CREDITORS of Power Store, the electrical chain created from former electricity board showrooms, will decide today whether to support the struggling company. A group of about 40 major suppliers was last night considering a report from accountants KPMG on the state of Power Store's finances. Barclays Bank has withdrawn overdraft facilities and a petition to appoint an administrator will be heard in court on Monday, unless an informal arrangement with creditors can be agreed. — Roger Cove

Sainsbury saves fish

Sainsbury has joined Unilever in moving to end the use of fish oil from industrial fishing in European waters to conserve fish stocks. The supermarket chain said yesterday it will phase out the use of fish oil in margarine, biscuits and cakes within a year. Unilever announced similar action on Monday after consulting the Worldwide Fund for Nature. — Roger Cove



The Underside

Dan Atkinson

LOYD'S of London, browned off at reports of £11 billion losses, or even — in a paper whose anonymity we shall respect (the Times) — "losses of £11 billion-£12 billion", is keen to set the record straight. "Lloyd's losses," writes a spokesman, "do not, and have not, amounted to £11 billion." Such touchiness is understandable: £11 billion losses would indicate colossal mismanagement. Fortunately, our flagship insurance market can set minds at rest. Losses for 1988 to 1992, according to said spokesman, totalled only £7,933 billion. That's a relief.

BROWN Version (1): Poor Tim Roberts. The PR chief at KPMG had the hopeless job of trying to defend the accountancy firm against this week's crazed attack from Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown. Bad enough that all he could officially say was "no comment". Even worse that Mr Roberts is a paid-up member of the Labour Party and treasurer of his local constituency party.

BROWN Version (2): Hostilities between number-crunchers at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the office of the Shadow Chancellor eased a little last week. IFS chief Andrew Dilnot, previously a figure of hate in the Brown bunker because of his habit of criticising the Brownie's "ideas", publicly supported Labour's plans to replace child benefit at 16-plus with an education allowance. Brown aides were cautiously pleased but, steeped in Westminster military thinking, still nervous. Mr Dilnot has proved his ability to blow up Labour's tax plans with a single appearance on the Today programme. So whose trenches does he

now occupy? Is he on their side? They are right to keep up their guard: Mr Dilnot relishes the role of sniper in No Man's Land — and cares little whom he hits.

DATELINE Lisbon, where the world's anti-fraud elite gathered earlier this week to discuss money laundering and international economic crime. It was a crazy gig, everyone was there: New

York County DA's office, Serious Fraud Office, Scotland Yard and Romania's General Inspectorate of Police. SFO assistant director Chris Dickson may be a whizz at nailing the swindlers, but the world's greatest map-reader he ain't. Puzzling over a city plan in the VIP room, trying to work out on which side of the river he was situated, our man seemed helpless. Fortunately, a superior orienteer, in the shape of Senior Superintendent Philip Wolmarans of the South African Police, was on hand to assist.

THE Mosleyite-sounding Action Centre for news recently, calling for a huge expansion of the powers of the European Court and generally urging a "constructive" approach to the single currency. Readers keen to show gratitude to the centre's big-business backers may have little call for the services of Hambros, Salomon Bros and Andersen Consulting, but

there's always BMW and Bosch, not to mention TSB, Glaxo (Zantac, Becomase, Zovirax) and Grand Met. o-politan (J&B Rare, Smirnoff, Burger King, Balleys). Let's all say a big thank-you: Buy, buy, buy.

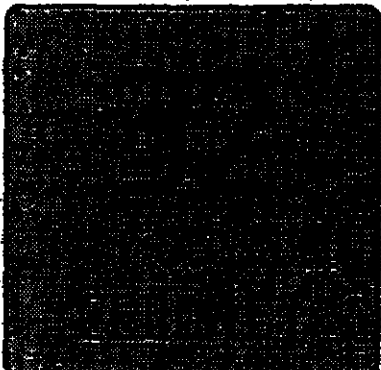
IN THE quieter moments of the Lisbon crook-bashing summit, we explore the narrow streets and alleyways and find enterprise alive and flourishing. One bar appears to be located in a pet shop (or is it the other way around?), and the tame bookshop-café of America could learn a trick from the fully-licensed Café c/Livros in Travessa da Bon-Hora, a wonderfully civilised institution celebrating its 14th birthday. We reach for a copy of The Detective Film by William K Everson (Cisadel 1972), a snip at 4,520 escudos, and a sticker on the dust jacket catches the eye: Departamento de Libreria. Somewhere in neighbouring Spain, someone is searching for his Everson. Still, that's enterprise.

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صوتنا من الامل

Racing Hustler good value for Whitbread

FEW would begrudge the amazingly tough Young Hustler a big race triumph and Saturday's Whitbread Gold Cup at Sandown could yet provide him with an opportunity to carve his name in the hall of fame.

This will be the 60th race of Young Hustler's career yet he continues to race with the enthusiasm of a horse with half his mileage on the clock.

There was certainly no evidence in the Martell Grand National that his efforts over the years were beginning to take their toll and he carried out weight with distinction, making a lot of the running and jumping boldly throughout.

He gave his backers a terrific run for their money and it was only in the final stride that he surrendered fourth place to Sir Peter Lely.

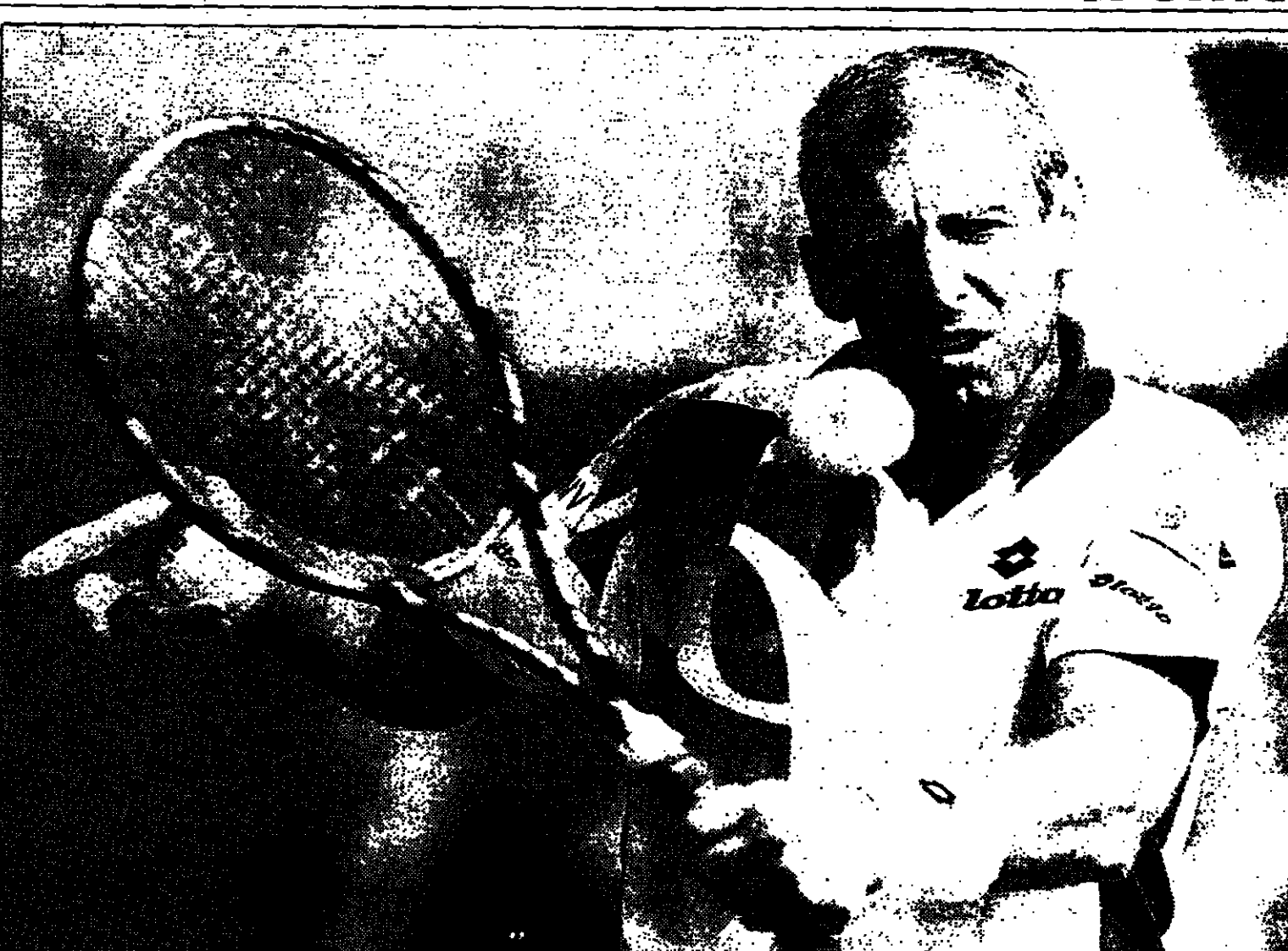
Typically, he seems to have recovered quickly and Nigel Twiston-Davies, his trainer, reports him in great heart.

With the prospect of fast ground at Sandown he will be in his element. The 24 fences and stamina-demanding trip will mask his lack of finishing pace and at his current ante-post price of 10-1 he looks decent value.

The gamble of the race this week has been Richard Dunwoody's mount, General Rusty, who, despite having only set 5lb in the long handicap, was backed again with Coral's yesterday and is down to 7-1.

General Rusty must have firm ground and has apparently been laid out for the race by Charlie Mann, who put him away after October in the Martell Cup.

He has had two recent runs to sharpen him up and performed ominously well when



Clay mastery... Thomas Muster sweeps to a straight-sets win on his favourite surface in Monte Carlo yesterday

Spain's top two demand £52,000 to play

ARANTXA Sanchez Vicario and Conchita Martinez are refusing to play in Spain's Fed Cup against South Africa this weekend unless they receive some £52,000 each.

Spain's top two women players have rejected a third and apparently final offer of £26,500 from their tennis federation to appear in the country's opening defence of the trophy.

The federation's spokeswoman said yesterday that it was still trying to persuade the two to participate, but "in principle" they were not going to play in the World Group match in Murcia on Saturday.

It will be the first time in eight years that Sanchez Vicario and Martinez, ranked second and third in the world respectively, have not supported Spain. The Spanish federation president Agustin Pujol called the dispute "a disaster".

However, Pujol said it was possible the two would be allowed to play in later Fed Cup competition if Spain progressed. Their replacements against the South Africans will be Virginia Ruano and Maria Antonia Sanchez.

Britain were yesterday relegated to their lowest status in the Fed Cup, despite a win at the third attempt in beating Slovenia 2-1 in their Europe-Africa tie at La Manga, Spain.

Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson, and Yevgeny Kafelnikov (6) said he felt unwell during his 6-4, 6-3 defeat by Cedric Pioline in world record holder, announced in Cardiff that he would lift his boycott of BAF-organised events this year.

Jackson, who is set on Olympic gold in Atlanta, fell out with Peter Radford, the federation's chairman, last year after the world championship trials in Birmingham.

Radford had been incensed when Jackson, who runs in the flat 100m, pulled out with an injury on the Saturday and then ran over hurdles the next day in Italy. The two clashed privately, and later in the year Jackson publicly announced that his only British appearances this year would be at the Cardiff Games and the Olympic trials.

Jackson, who insisted yesterday that he would still not be talking to Radford, will now run in the BAF international meeting at Gateshead on June 20, where all British's main Olympic medal hopes are expected to compete. This also seems certain to include Linford Christie, whether or not he decides to defend his Olympic 100m title.

With the federation anxious to negotiate a new television deal when the ITV contract runs out this year, it is imperative that the leading athletes are at the showcase meeting. To that end the BAF's Peter Hier flew to Australia this winter to negotiate with Jackson, who was training there.

"I didn't realise how hard the negotiations were, and I could not have kicked them in the face," Jackson said yesterday. "I made one or two mistakes last summer and I probably could have handled things a bit more calmly. I am much happier now."

Beverly runners and riders with form

2.10 Dark Dandy	3.40 Pinescent
2.40 MONTGOMERY (cap)	4.10 Amberstone
2.10 Star of Castles (pub)	4.40 Chatham (R)

... [Detailed racing results and form tables for Beverly, including race numbers, names, and odds] ...

Fontwell (N.H.)

2.20 Inverloch	3.20 Maresfield
2.20 Drumstick	4.20 Chilly Chilli
2.20 Fresh Choice	4.20 Spring Grass
	4.20 Whitting Wood

... [Detailed racing results and form tables for Fontwell, including race numbers, names, and odds] ...

Perth (N.H.)

2.00 Hamilton Terrace	3.20 Opera House
2.00 Cranston	4.00 Honeycomb
2.00 City County	4.30 Scribble

... [Detailed racing results and form tables for Perth, including race numbers, names, and odds] ...

Results

CATTERICK	2.20 (1) 10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100
PERTH	2.20 (1) 10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100
SOUTHWELL	2.20 (1) 10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100

Turner fined

BLOCK TURNER, the Tavistock trainer, has been fined £500 and his mare Lying Eyes disqualified from a race she won at Wincanton in January after failing a dope test. Turner was found guilty of his second dope testing offence by the Jockey Club's Disciplinary Committee.

RACINE

0930 1664

BEVERLY	101	201
PERTH	102	202
FONTWELL	103	203
IRISH	120	220

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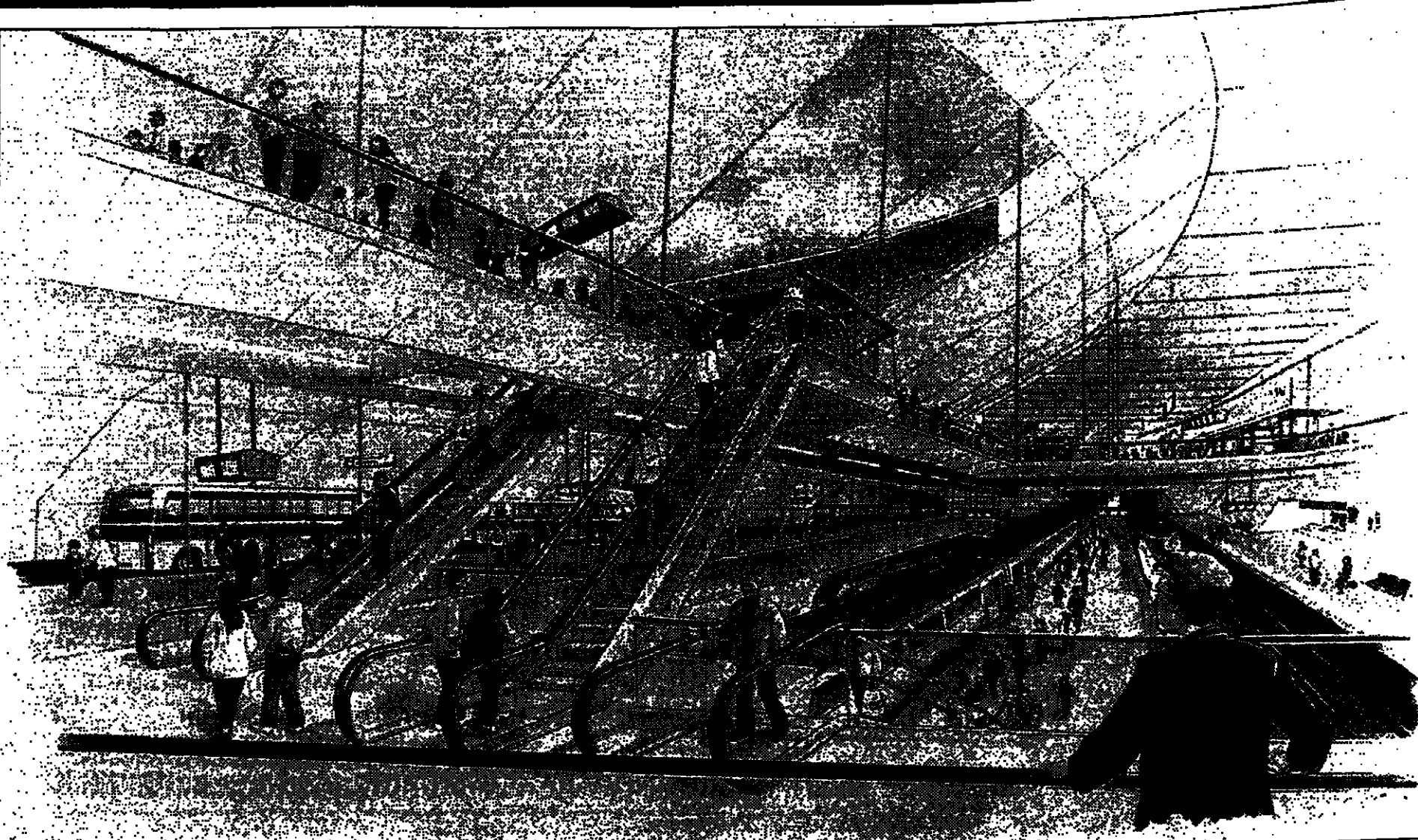
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THE CAPITAL MAKES ITS BID FOR THE NEW NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE



Training ground... Wembley Stadium station, revamped to accommodate InterCity and Eurostar, would bring the fans straight into the ground, according to an artist's impression

Towering dream for Wembley

The draughty, bleak and inaccessible stadium complex will be transformed if plans revealed yesterday win the Sports Council's vote — and National Lottery money. **James Meikle** reports

FOOTBALL is a religion. Wembley claims to be its national shrine, and now it is being promised a square that dwarfs St Peter's in Rome.

Ambitious proposals to create a plaza with cafes, fountains, shops, hotels, a theatre and possibly even an ice-rink and national sports museum were unveiled yesterday as the stakes were raised in the battle to provide a new national stadium.

Brent council in north London, and Sir Norman Foster's architectural partnership, presented a £200 million package of improvements to the bleak approaches to the existing stadium, to road and rail links, and to the drab neighbouring industrial estate which would become a spanking "techno-park".

The vision of a square that would be bigger than St Peter's and Trafalgar Square combined — host to carnivals, circuses and other events — depends on the Sports Council picking Wembley, not Manchester, for the national stadium and its associated National Lottery money in July.

Without that endorsement,

the private sector that would pay for most of the development would not be interested in much of the "master plan", which envisages an approach road leading direct to five-level underground car parks, a warm-up athletics track, and 40ft columns carrying advertisements, temperatures and sports results lining the main approaches to the stadium.

Meanwhile, the trust promoting the stadium bid is considering both turning the pitch through 90 degrees and moving the famous (and listed) twin towers, which it has promised to keep if it wins in July. The latter plan would involve ensuring another architectural focal point for the square when the design is put out to competition.

The trust is recasting its bid for the stadium, previously more than £100 million, and may also ask for Lottery funds to help the development of the plaza.

Work would start in 1998, with the 1999 FA Cup final, internationals and other events moving elsewhere. Manchester United's Old Trafford ground, with its new 55,000 capacity, would be an

obvious alternative venue, unless United reached one of the two main soccer finals themselves.

The trust is confident it will reassure the Sports Council over its independence from Wembley plc, which would donate the land and brand name in return for a 21-year contract to run facilities at the new stadium.

The Brent proposals, expected to be endorsed by councillors next week before going out to consultation, are designed to remove concerns the Sports Council had about Wembley's dowdy surroundings.

London Underground is planning a £22 million new look for Wembley Park tube station, including doubling the capacity from 25,000 passengers to more than 50,000 an hour and arranging to ferry fans and visitors towards a new look Olympic Way.

Railtrack may revamp the poorly used Wembley Stadium station, which in the architects' imagination was presented as a four-platform InterCity and Eurostar complex with escalators straight into the new stadium and the square.

The architects have suggested that visitors could use "intelligent tickets" linked to information boards, giving directions to seats or details of forthcoming events.

Brent officials yesterday insisted that high-profile developers would be interested in a slice of the action, which would be a catalyst for regeneration of the area. It is offering £23 million in Government and its own funds.

Sir Norman stressed the "human dimension" of the grand scheme. "We have tried to create an environment in which pedestrians can move about freely in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere, away from traffic."

Robert Gordon Clark, of the English National Stadium Trust which leads the Wembley bid and is prospective owner of the freehold of the site, said the new plans created "the perfect setting" and would make access to Wembley as quick and easy as any stadium in the world.

But Manchester, where a £125 million stadium is planned alongside a cycle ve-

lodyme and a medical and fitness centre as well as improved transport links, hit back.

Graham Stringer, the city council leader, said: "We have an acquired site, 100 per cent in our ownership, with planning permission to build the stadium. Wembley's problem is that you would be putting Lottery money straight into bankers' hands and not into sport. They would be adding to their existing problem by having to go through a major planning inquiry."

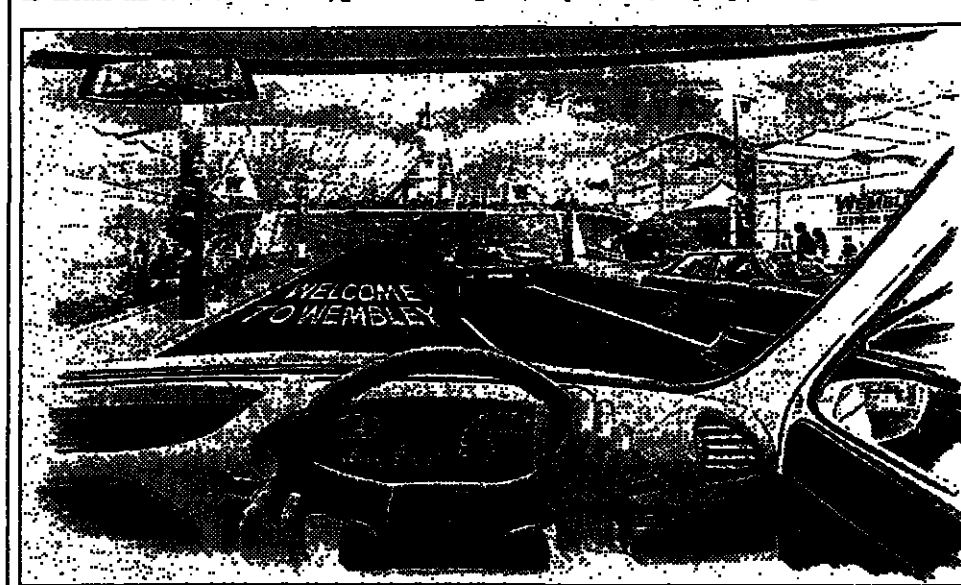
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Super highway... approach road would lead straight to an underground car-park

Snooker

Griffiths' great escape

Clive Everton in Sheffield

TERRY GRIFFITHS produced another of his epic comebacks to survive the opening round of the Embassy World Championship here yesterday. The 48-year-old Welshman recovered from 0-6 and 5-9 to beat Jamie Burnett, a 20-year-old Scot making his Crucible Theatre debut, 10-9 on the final black.

"The one thing I haven't lost is my will to win and the ability to fight," said Griffiths, who won the championship at his first attempt 17 years ago.

His opponent in the last 16 will be Steve Davis, who has won all their six previous meetings here. But even if that

sequence is maintained, Griffiths will have a memory to treasure from what may well prove his last appearance on snooker's most famous stage.

Nowadays the Welsh veteran plays in spectacles and tends to start slowly. He took yesterday's first frame to close to 5-6, but the end looked tight when it became 3-8. Griffiths, perhaps feeling that there was not much left to lose, dominated the next two frames, his opponent potting only one ball, and although Burnett took the next to lead 9-5 he was palpably feeling the pressure as Griffiths levelled at 9-9.

The end of the deciding frame almost defied belief. Burnett, 13 behind with two reds left, laid a snooker behind the black. Griffiths

grazed the black to concede seven points, then six more, to pressurise Burnett with a clear "victory" chance. Brown from his spot was match ball but Burnett, needlessly screwing back for blue, scooped the cue-ball almost a foot too far and into a middle pocket. Griffiths, drawn and tense, returned to the table and cleared from brown to black to add an unlikely victory to his Crucible lore.

"I don't know how I potted the last four balls," he said. "The moral of the story is obviously not to give up."

"I thought I'd won the match at 9-5," said the crestfallen Burnett. "I hope I can put it down to experience. There is nothing I can do about it now. I've just got to get it out of my mind."

Golf

Seve is punished for swinging the lead

Michael Britton in Valencia

AN INJURY to Severiano Ballesteros's left wrist may jeopardise his latest comeback, in the Turespafia Masters which begins on the El Saler links here today.

After back problems in the United States, where he was forced to pull out of the Players Championship, the Spaniard has strained a tendon swinging a lead-weighted club in his bedroom.

He played in the pro-am yesterday with it heavily strapped, and will have further physiotherapy before he starts today's first round of the Spanish tourist board event in company with Sam Torrance and Costantino Rocca.

"The club is four times heavier than normal and I guess I have overdone it," Ballesteros said. "At this stage it is not serious but I will have to be careful because already there is inflammation in my wrist."

The Ryder Cup captain has finished only two of the five tournaments he has played since he ended his self-imposed five-month exile in Morocco in March. He finished last in Dubai and next to last in the US Masters, but he said yesterday: "My form is getting better day by day, and it is only a matter of time. I am beginning to pick up the

rhythm and I am enjoying the competition. Hopefully I will be there soon."

He said that Nick Faldo's Augusta victory had given him fresh hope. "He has given inspiration to people of the same age. I think now that if he can do it, why not me?"

Ballesteros is 39 and Faldo will be the same age in July when the Spaniard will be attempting a third Open victory at Royal Lytham, where he won in 1979 and 1982.

Gordon Sherry, the British amateur champion who makes his professional debut in next week's Italian Open, has been allocated a place in the Volvo PGA Championship at Wentworth from May 24 to 27.

Rugby League

Saints not in the mood for any surprises

Paul Fitzpatrick

ALTHOUGH Shaun McRae was displeased with his side's performance in the narrow win at Halifax last Sunday, the Australian coach yesterday named a predictable St Helens side for the Challenge Cup final.

In contrast the Bradford Bulls team announced on Tuesday had contained a major surprise in the selection of Jon Hamer at blind-side prop.

Hamer has not played senior football for four months and McRae was sceptical that the Bradford coach would play him on Saturday. "Brian Smith must think we are living in Disneyland," he said.

"When did Brian ever pick a side a few days before a game and that side actually took the field? All I am saying is that he has picked a squad of 15 players and I do not think we will really know the make-up of his team until an hour before kick-off."

For St Helens the teenager Danny Arnold keeps his place on the right wing and Alan Hunts, the only survivor from their last final appearance in 1991, has to be content with a place on the bench.

Saints are happy with the fitness of Simon Booth and he will partner Chris Joynt in the second row.

Selected sides: Greater: Cast, Collins, Loughlin, Scates; Bradley, Paul; McDermott, Dwyer, Hamer, Nichie, Deussiger, Jones; St Helens: Prescott, Arnold, Gibbs, Newlove, Sullivan, Hammond, Goulding, Powell, Cunningham, Leadman, Joynt, South, Northey; Referee: S Cummings (Widnes).

Cricket

Knight makes a day of it as century punishes students

NICK KNIGHT hit 128 off a weak attack as Warwickshire hammered 355 for seven off British Universities in a 50 overs match at The Parks yesterday. The students managed only 187 for eight in reply.

Luckily for the Universities, perhaps, the county resisted the jet-lagged South Africa all-rounder Shaun Pollock.

Knight and Neil Smith hit 55 off the first five overs and the partnership reached 86 before Smith was caught for 23 in the 10th over.

Paul Smith joined Knight and completed a half-century from 39 balls as they added 107 in 14 overs before Smith

was caught for 51. Shortly afterwards Knight reached his century, with 13 boundaries and a six, from 107 balls before being third out at 222, caught at the wicket for 123 after adding 100 with Dominic Ooster (63).

West Indies will begin a five-Test series against Australia in Brisbane on November 22 with the second a week later in Sydney, where a one-day international will be played on New Year's Day between Australia and Pakistan, who join West Indies in a triangular series. The final Test between Australia and West Indies will be in Perth from February 1-5.

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Soccer

Sugar cuts his stake in Spurs

Ian King

LAN SUGAR, Tottenham's chairman, reduced his stake in the club from 51 to 41 per cent yesterday. Announcing an £11 million rights issue to finance further improvements to White Hart Lane, he waived his entitlement to take part in the issue but emphasised his continuing commitment to Spurs.

ing in some places pre-Bosman was, to say the least, irresponsible. He made it clear he was not prepared to follow those who pay inflated fees or wages for players. "In any other commercial enterprise seeing similar changes," he said, "it would be logical that nobody would pay out lots of money. But this is an illogical industry and it's made illegal by some of the benefactors you find supporting certain clubs where the cheque-book has gone slightly out of control and the balance sheets don't mean anything."



Caught on the hop... Gary McAllister beats Denmark's Brian Nielsen to the ball in Copenhagen last night. But it was Scotland who were eventually floored, losing 2-0 to their superior hosts

Rugby Union

League One: Leicester 28, Gloucester 6

Leicester neglect point-duty

Robert Armstrong

LEICESTER'S attempt to keep their Courage league title faltered despite a last-minute victory over a makeshift Gloucester side that was never short of fighting spirit at Welford Road last night.

A few minutes before half-time Gloucester deservedly narrowed the gap with a second penalty by Mapietoff from 40 metres. But Lilley promptly gave Leicester a 13-6 lead with another long-range penalty.

Swales has heart attack

Derek Potter

PETER SWALES, formerly chairman of Manchester City and of the FA's international committee, is recovering from a major heart attack.

now changing hands at 60p as City fight to avoid relegation from the Premiership. Swales, who remains vice-chairman of the FA international committee and a senior member of the FA council, became chairman of City, the club he had supported from childhood, in 1978 after two years on the Maine Road board. He first ventured into football in 1961 when he and his former business partner Noel White, a Liverpool director, took over the non-League club Altrincham.

Uefa losing Bosman battle

Europe throws out compromise proposal for at least six 'nationals' per side

Raf Cosset in Brussels

EUROPEAN football's governing body faces defeat in its last stand to preserve national identity on the pitch when the club line up for next season's major European tournament.

of years, regardless of their nationality. The request has fallen on deaf ears. The European Union announced in Brussels yesterday that there would be no amendments to the ruling. It ordered Uefa not to go back on its commitment to open up competitions to all foreign players from within the EU's 15-nation area.

The European Court of Justice ruling had left no room for compromise. Last December the EU's highest court upheld a case brought by the Belgian player Jean-Marc Bosman, supporting the European Commission's view that any limits on EU foreigners are illegal. The Commission, which enforces EU law, wants full freedom for any EU player to compete wherever he wants in the 15 member nations.

caught off guard last week when Uefa appeared to go back on its promises. Ticket demand for the Champions' Cup final between Juventus of Turin and Ajax of Amsterdam has already outstripped supply by six times, Juventus officials said yesterday. Fewer than 65,000 tickets will be on sale for the final at Rome's Olympic stadium on May 22.

Internationals: Czech Republic 2, Republic of Ireland 0

Irish fade away in second half

MAKESHIFT Irish side fought hard but could not prevent the Czech Republic recording their 11th home win in a row in Prague yesterday. Second-half goals from Martin Frydek and Pavel Kuba had the visitors resigned to their fourth successive defeat.

replaced at half-time by Curtis Fleming. The Irish competed well in the opening 45 minutes, however, and Niall Quinn twice went close with headers, Paul McGrath, winning a record 61 minutes, also unlucky, having a shot blocked and then firing into the side netting. And they might have had a penalty after 27 minutes when Ray Houghton put Kevin Moran through on the left, but Manchester United full-back appeared to be pulled down by Radoslaw Lalat but the referee waved play on.

Andy Townsend had a 25-yard volley deflected round a post as the visitors dominated for long spells, with Cunningham making a particularly impressive debut, but the crucial opening goal came after 61 minutes. Radoslaw fed Kuba on the right and, with defenders standing still, he set up Frydek who made no mistake from close range. Eight minutes later it was all over when Kuba scored from 18 yards.

and created the better chances," he said. "But had defending cost us the first goal and when we lost our shape that led to a second. If you get chances at this level you have to score."

Switzerland 2, Wales 0

Coleman suffers Alpine angst

WALE'S fought hard and defended stoutly but two lapses by Chris Coleman doomed them to defeat by a skilful Switzerland in this friendly international in Lugano last night.

drastically to the ground. The referee awarded a penalty and Turkeyilmaz blasted home the spot-kick. Coyne was replaced at half-time but that was all. Bobby Gould's plan, Coleman's goalkeeper Andrew McCulloch and Manchester United youngster Simon Davies brought Gould's new caps on the night to four. Both substitutes impressed in the second half, but a Welsh goal would not come.

Northern Ireland 1, Sweden 2

McMahon too little too late

TOTTENHAM'S left-winger Gerard McMahon gave the home crowd something to cheer about when he headed home in the 94th minute, but it came too late to do anything more than give the scorers responsibility.

er after 60 minutes. Rowlands's deep cross from the left was knocked clear and Lomas came steaming in for a 20-yard drive that Andersson did well to turn away. But Ingegnor sealed the game for Sweden on 58 minutes when the former Sheffield Wednesday midfielder skipped past two challenges before planting the ball past Davison and into the corner of the net.

Everton lining up £3m return for Woan

Everton lining up £3m return for Woan

THE Nottingham Forest winger Ian Woan may be on his way back to Everton this summer, 10 years after he was shown the door at Everton's manager Joe Royle inquired recently about Woan's availability.

Results

Soccer

FRIENDLY INTERNATIONALS Czech Rep 2-0 Ireland (0) D. Kuba 61, P. Kuba 61. Ireland 0-2 Czech Rep (0) D. Kuba 61, P. Kuba 61. Scotland 0-2 England (0) D. Kuba 61, P. Kuba 61. Wales 0-2 Switzerland (0) D. Kuba 61, P. Kuba 61.

Sport in brief

Michael Moorer of the United States has been cleared to fight Axel Schulz of Germany for the vacant IBF heavyweight title on June 22, probably in Berlin, after a US appeal court denied South Africa's Frans Botha an injunction against the contest.

Boxing

Walker confirmed their superiority in the 470 class with a third place that put them 12 points clear at the top of the table. John Merricks and Ian Walker confirmed their superiority in the 470 class with a third place that put them 12 points clear at the top of the table.

Rugby Union

Simon Shaw, the 22-year-old Bristol lock who had been tipped for full England honours, will play in a comeback on Saturday five months after suffering a career-threatening injury.

Swimming

Kieren Parkin, the world record holder, failed to qualify for the 400 metres freestyle at the Atlanta Olympics when she finished third in Australia's Olympic trials in Sydney.

Sailing

Andy Beadsworth, Barry Parkin and Adrian Stead sailed a solid race to make the final eight for the match racing which concludes the Olympic series in the Sardinia regatta, ending Bob Fisher's five-year reign.

Ice Hockey

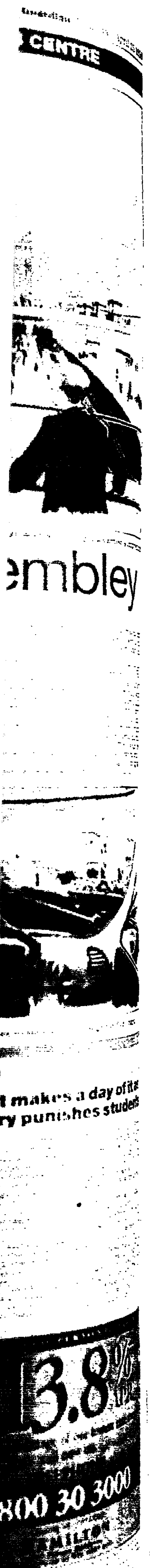
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP Group A Sweden 5-1 France 1, Group B Sweden 2, France 1.

Snooker

SEBASTIAN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Sheffield) First round: D. Higgins 1-0 M. Williams, 1-0 M. Williams, 1-0 M. Williams.

Fixtures

(7:30 until stated) Soccer ON WANDALM CONFEDERATE: Switzerland v Northville (7:30), Hungary v Northville (7:30), Denmark v Northville (7:30).



Jackson lifts his boycott, page 13

Wembley looks to 21st century, page 14

Sugar cuts his stake in Spurs, page 15

Leicester keep hopes alive, page 15

Sports Guardian

VENABLES DRAWS SOME CONSOLATION BUT BROWN'S MEN ARE GIVEN A BATTERING

International: England 0, Croatia 0

England fire only blanks

David Lacey at Wembley

ENGLAND suffered a frustrating evening of noughts and crosses at Wembley last night, responding to Croatia's obvious quality with a solid performance which saw several good opportunities created but two goals disallowed in the first half.

Robbie Fowler, in his first full international, put one of the evening's best chances over the bar and late in the game Teddy Sheringham hit a post with Steve McManaman putting the rebound wide.

With the European Championship 45 days away one would have thought there was little left to learn about England that Terry Venables did not know already. Yet last night's exercise was more about revisionism than revision. In essence Venables was examining his options. The possibility of losing Adams from his defence had become a probability; he was without Shearer and Ferdinand in attack; and he still could not be sure that Anderton would be fit in time.

Hence the need to see if playing three at the back and five in midfield would work against the quality of opposition England will have to beat if they are to reach the later stages of the tournament — not that they can encounter Croatia before the semi-finals.

Fowler's first start in an England game gave the night an unusual air of expectation. Prolific scorers in the league do not always negotiate the step up to international level, Ian Wright being a case in point, but Fowler was never going to fall through lack of confidence.

Croatia had been scheduled to play England at the start of the season but uncertainties in Bosnia delayed their first visit to Wembley by seven months. From England's point of view this may have been as well, with Euro '96 so close, whatever Venables learned last night was going to be far more relevant than it might have been last autumn.

Last night Croatia's football quickly matched the chequered pattern of their red-and-white shirts. Their passing was patient and possessive, draughts rather than chess, with space created through careful probing rather than cut-and-thrust.

In the first five minutes 15 passes produced a dipping



Heads he wins... Teddy Sheringham rises to get the better of two Croatia defenders during last night's match at Wembley. PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARNON

long shot from Prosniecki that cleared the bar as a flag was raised for offside. Earlier the ease with which Jarni had slipped past Stone on the left, learned last night was going to be far more relevant than it might have been last autumn.

Last night Croatia's football quickly matched the chequered pattern of their red-and-white shirts. Their passing was patient and possessive, draughts rather than chess, with space created through careful probing rather than cut-and-thrust.

In the first five minutes 15 passes produced a dipping

and his ability to surprise defenders became more important to England the longer the game progressed. Otherwise they looked for the quality of cross to put pressure on Mirmic in the Croatian goal.

Midway through the first half, between two disallowed goals for England — once when Sheringham fouled Mirmic, then when Platt was offside — Stone's centre found Jerkan prepared to let the ball sail over his head, allowing Fowler to nip in behind the defender to produce a sharp downward header which Mirmic had to be alert to save. Soon after this a corner from the left, following yet another accurate centre by Stone on the right, was not cleared and this time Sheringham's overhead shot was pushed wide by an in-

creasingly busy Croatian keeper. England ended the first half with a further near-miss from their most convincing movement of the opening 45 minutes. Gascoigne and Fowler worked the ball out to Stone, who did not cross this time but sent Neville past the outside of the Croatia defence for a telling centre, hard and flat, which Platt met with a resounding header. Mirmic denied England a goal by blocking the ball on the line, and neither Platt nor Sheringham could exploit the rebound. Yet England had completed the half in better fettle than they had begun it.

Croatia, however, regained something of their earlier momentum in the second half. Stanic had replaced Boban, whose fitness had been in doubt, and England's defence

again found itself under pressure. The mood quickly passed and England reasserted their pattern of progress. After 57 minutes they again nearly took the lead. Stone's through-pass bounced off Fowler but McManaman's speed and anticipation took him through the defence and would have brought him a goal had Mirmic not deflected the shot wide.

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Denmark 2, Scotland 0

Double dose of Laudrup chokes Scots

Patrick Glenn in Copenhagen

SCOTLAND retreated from Denmark last night after a beating which was far more serious than could be imagined merely from looking at the surface bruising.

They were overwhelmed by a Danish team of imagination and devastating quickness and Craig Brown, trying to compile a squad worthy of representing the country at Euro '96, must have been shocked by a first half in which the Danes could have scored five or six times.

Henry, carrying a niggling injury, looked as though he was running through molasses in that period.

At least Brown did not attempt to whitewash his team's performance, admitting that they have some way to go before they can compete with a team as accomplished as last night's victors.

"We are a team of limited ability," said the Scotland manager. "We don't have players of the magnitude of the Laudrup brothers."

"We do have a serious goalkeeping problem and we could have been 4-0 down at the interval. We know we have a lot of work to do to compete well in England, but I'm sure we won't give goals away so easily there."

In the qualifying series the Scots scored only five goals against their major opponents in Russia (one), Greece (one) and Finland (three). Their total of 21 in 10 games was helped by the seven each against San Marino and the Faroes.

It was not until after the interval that McAllister, captaining from midfield, became sufficiently assertive. Indeed, the Leeds man had the best attempts on goal, a blistering volley which Krogh, who had replaced Schmeichel, had to beat away and a low drive from Spencer's pass which slid marginally wide.

On a difficult night, Spencer did his prospects of making

the finals in June little harm, working hard and creating the chance early on from which Gallacher gave Schmeichel his only test with a powerful drive from 15 yards.

There is little doubt that the Scots missed the defensive qualities of Alan McLaren of Rangers, but his injury may require surgery and he is not certain to make the championship. In any case there was the unmistakable hint that the Denmark players in the second half were beginning to unwind, their work done.

The Scots have yet to acquire the pace and the basic knowledge of the game which allowed the Danes to produce the kind of goals that gave them a telling lead by the interval. Those strikes from the Laudrup brothers were scant reward as the home side tore through Brown's team with alarming ease and frequency.

When Josh McKinlay lost possession in midfield and Henry played a simple ball forward to Beck on the right, Henry completely miscalculated his challenge, coming in on the wrong side of the ball and allowing the home forward a clear run to the edge of the penalty area. The cut-back was deflected by McMillin to Michael Laudrup, whose right foot drilled the ball low to the right of Leighton from eight yards.

The second goal was even more economical, as Michael Laudrup received a header from defence and played it first time into the path of his brother. Brian was off and yards clear of the Scotland defence before carrying the ball wide of Leighton and sliding it into an empty net.

SCOTLAND: Schmeichel (Krogh, 46min), McAllister, Glenn, Fisker (Larsen, 51), Scharnberg, B. Nielsen, Thomsen, M. Laudrup (A. Nielsen, 55), Beck, B. Laudrup.
SCOTLAND: Leighton (Hibernian), Gamm, Rangers, 40; Barker (Chelsea), Beck (Aberdeen), Henry (Blackburn), W. Macleod (Blackburn), Boyd (Celtic), T. McIlroy (Celtic), McCann (Rangers), McAllister (Leeds), Collins (Celtic), Gallacher (Blackburn), Jackson (Hibernian), 72, Spencer (Chelsea), McLeod, Rangers, 72.
Referee: J. Wagenaar (Netherlands)

Picture, page 15

Whitewash of Irish and Welsh

IRISH and Welsh soccer suffered a demoralising evening as their three national teams all suffered defeats, with only Northern Ireland managing a goal. Mick McCarthy's Republic of Ireland fell 2-0 to the

Czech Republic in Prague, then Northern Ireland lost 2-1 at home to Sweden. Gerard McMahon scoring the home goal. Wales were defeated 2-0 in Switzerland.

Reports, page 15

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Fowler target of Barcelona

Ian Ross

BARCELONA are to make an audacious attempt to sign Liverpool's rising star Robbie Fowler. And if the Spanish club fail to land Fowler, who only six months ago signed a four-year contract to keep him at Anfield, their coach Johan Cruyff will make a third attempt to land the Manchester United winger Ryan Giggs.

As Barcelona's season of impoverished form nears its end, amid much discontent from the team's fervent Catalan supporters, the club have singled out Fowler as the player best equipped to help usher in a new and more fulfilling era.

A Barcelona director has confirmed that a formal bid of around £10 million is likely to be lodged in the next few weeks for a player whose vast potential was amply under-

lined last night when he started a senior England international for the first time, only a few days after celebrating his 21st birthday.

Fowler has scored 36 goals for Liverpool this season, and last month he was named as the Professional Footballers' Association's Young Player of the Year.

It is, however, inconceivable that Liverpool would sanction the striker's departure.

Mooreover G2 page 7

Guardian Crossword No 20,636

Set by Rufus

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- Across**
- 9 A lone crab scuttles round by the sea in Spain (9)
 - 10 Chap gets a greeting in the lift (5)
 - 11 Nelson's enduring success (7)
 - 12 Order the ambitious officer hopes to get (7)
 - 13 Ride or fall (4)
 - 14 Estimate on rebuilding horns (10)
 - 16 Learnt the third movement with lasting result (7)
 - 17 I'm held in scorn, turning bright red (7)
 - 19 Market researcher on camera (10)
 - 22 Lines at last for the annoying child (4)
 - 24 Traders upset by delays (7)
 - 25 His initial confusion was amusing (7)
- Down**
- 1 More than mean (5,3,7)
 - 2 It makes perfect doctors (8)
 - 3 Duck consumed by a dog for tea (5)
 - 4 Try on possibly worn behind the ears (5)
 - 5 They may be square or round (6)
 - 6 Sort of sketch one doesn't want to go under the hammer (5)
 - 7 He's learned to park a vehicle in the street (5)
 - 8 Requirement for sewers near land the dead dealt with (8,3,6)
 - 15 All the same, it's how servicemen dress (9)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,636

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- 17 One accused of infidelity is scared to become involved (9)
 - 18 Beached and abandoned (8)
 - 20 Ex-star replaced in crowd scenes (5)
 - 21 As a sun resort it's capital (5)
 - 23 Small firms get together over a drink (5)
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